

thechronicle

**FAMILIES COME TO
SEA THE FUN ON
BIG DAY OUT**
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WEIGHT AND THE
YEARS**
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MOB MADNESS



A car is set ablaze near Moor Street Station, Birmingham as rioting and looting spreads across the Midlands – Rampages page 2

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Mobs' looting rampages spread over the region

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Masked rioters brought terror to the streets of the West Midlands for a second night, looting shops, setting fire to vehicles and attacking police.

Officers arrested 109 people on the streets of Wolverhampton, West Bromwich and Birmingham as young people in hooded tops ran amok.

Detectives launched a triple murder inquiry after men apparently attempting to protect a mosque from rioters were knocked down by a car in Birmingham.

Gangs of yobs were involved in running battles with police, arming themselves with sticks and hurling bottles and bricks. Shopkeepers in Wolverhampton desperately attempted to protect their businesses as stores were smashed and ransacked.

Many thugs brought bags with them to fill with stolen goods, with one woman donning gloves before entering a fashion store in Queen Street and leaving with handfuls of items.

Attacking

Businesses targeted included Marks & Spencer, Burton, Footlocker, T-Mobile, Coral, The Royal Bank of Scotland and the Tap & Spile pub. In West Bromwich, cars and a van were set alight as up to 200 youths charged through the town attacking homes, shops and cars.

Bins were hurled in the High Street before the group dragged a Land Rover and catering van into the centre of the street, later torching the vehicles. After hours of speculation on social networking sites Twitter and Facebook, violence erupted across the Midlands late Tuesday afternoon. The trouble in Wolverhampton was co-ordinated, with a firework released in Queen Square at 4.30pm kicking-starting a two-hour rampage through the rush hour.

In Birmingham, mobs of up to 500 youths marauded through the city centre.

Police have launched a triple murder inquiry after three men, aged 20, 30 and 31, were hit by a car on Dudley Road, Winson Green at 1am. One man has been arrested in connection with the incident and was today being questioned.

Supt Mark Payne said officers were studying CCTV footage in a bid to identify those involved in the riots, warning: "We are still sending out officers to arrest people. If you took part in the disorder, we are coming for you."

Supt Payne, who patrolled and watched some of the arrests on CCTV defended police tactics in the face of criticism from traders who claimed they stood by and let looting happen. He said officers needed to stand their ground to stop groups of youths breaching their lines and spreading further into the city. Elsewhere, small groups of teenagers gathered in Dudley's Market Place.



Police detain a man near the site of looting in an electronics store near New St Station, Birmingham

Three deaths amid the mayhem

Birmingham was plunged into a second night of violence, and a murder inquiry has been launched into the deaths of three men who were struck by a car early yesterday morning.

Looters wearing hoodies, scarves and balaclavas plundered city centre stores, with targets including a branch of Marks & Spencer and a hi-fi store.

H&M in New Street plus Urban Outfitters, The Regis hair salon and Lush, all in Corporation Street, were also attacked on Tuesday night. A car

in Moor Street was also set alight. Police are investigating reports that shots were fired in Aston.

Meanwhile, it was not clear whether the deaths of three men who were hit by a car in Birmingham in the early hours was linked to the violence.

West Midlands Police launched a murder inquiry after the men, aged 20, 30 and 31, were struck by the vehicle in Dudley Road, Winson Green, shortly after 1am.

Two men were pronounced dead at the scene of the incident, which may

be linked to the looting which has stunned the city. Up to 80 bystanders were present.

This morning, West Midlands Ambulance Service said the third man died from his injuries at City Hospital.

While it is not known if detectives will connect the deaths to the riots, a man has been arrested and a car recovered.

A police spokesman said forensics experts will examine the vehicle and appealed for witnesses to come forward.

Youths intent on destruction in town centre

Masked youths rampaged through West Bromwich town centre, hurling bricks and smashing up shops and cars.

It was the day gangs brought terror to the heart of West Bromwich leaving residents and shopkeepers fearing for their homes and businesses.

Panic was mounting from early Tuesday afternoon in West Bromwich as businesses closed ahead of the impending trouble. Shutters were pulled down and boards were nailed to shops on the High Street from around 2pm after fears masked youths intent on destruction would arrive.

Some of the first shops to close were small, family-owned jewellers, while banks such as Natwest and Barclays shut their doors after lunchtime.

The Asda Retail Park, which includes Marks & Spencer and Nike outlet stores, also closed early. The Morrisons superstore on The Ringway also began boarding up as it closed early and West Bromwich arts centre The Public was also closed. From early on families and shoppers had abandoned the town centre. But by mid afternoon small groups of youths, some believed to be aged as young as 11, and dressed in dark hooded tops and jeans, with covered faces, began filtering on to the town's streets, loitering near shops and on the lookout for trouble.

Erupted

By 4pm fears of worried shopkeepers turned into a reality as trouble erupted in the town, with many people speaking of youths charging through the area and attacking homes, shops and cars.

Around 200 youths tore bricks out of walls near to the Desi Junction pub at the top end of the High Street, while windows at the Quicksilver Gaming Centre were smashed. The damage was later boarded up. William Hill bookmakers was also hit. It was not long before riot police were brought in and road closures were in place.

The High Street was quickly cordoned off, and later junction 1 of the M5 at West Bromwich, Birmingham Road, Trinity Street, Trinity Way, West Bromwich Ringway, Spon Lane, Newton Road and Cronehills Linkway at the A41 Expressway, were also closed, blocking some of the major routes into the town centre. All of the roads remained closed until around 7.30am yesterday.

In full riot gear and shields, police lined up at points near to the Goose pub, the Farley Centre, near to Mann Brothers Ltd clothing store and Trinity Way. Dozens more as well as uniformed officers were also on patrol through the streets. As the drama unfolded onlookers from the nearby Sikh Gurdwara looked on in shock and disbelief. Many people also appeared to be standing guard outside their own properties. There were also reports of disruption spreading at the Windmill Centre in Smethwick.

At around 11.30pm leader of Sandwell Council, Councillor Darren Cooper wrote on Twitter: "Large groups of young people in Cape Hill Smethwick hanging around Carphone Warehouse. Massive police presence."

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Thousands expected at event

Thousands of visitors are expected to flock to this year's Stourport Land and River Carnival as organisers put the finishing touches to the programme.

The annual event will take place on September 3 and 4 with activities taking place around the town centre and by the riverside.

Attractions will include a parade, an illuminated river procession and a firework display. There will also be trade stalls and a fun fair. Stall holders and volunteers are needed and organisers are asking people to

get in touch. Among the entertainment will be Breaking Steel, a band who won the chance to perform at the event. Lead singer and bass player Thomas Guest-Ville, aged 19, guitarist James Griffiths, 20, and drummer Luke Morgan, 17, blew judges away with self-penned songs.

The Britain's Got Talent-style show was held at the Elizabeth Mills Centre in the town.

This year's carnival queen will be 21-year-old Kirsty Organ. The princess will be 13-year-old Stourport High School pupil Faith Broome-

Nelson and the rosebud will be six-year-old Abbie Little who attends Burlish Park Primary School.

Each year the popular carnival, which is in its 86th year, attracts more than 2,000 people.

The Saturday parade will leave Arley Kings Village Hall at 12.30pm and finish at the carnival field at Riverside Meadows at 2.30pm.

The deadline for traders to apply to run a stall is August 20. For information about trading or being a volunteer log on to www.stourportcarnival.co.uk

Tom overjoyed with treatment success

An 11-year-old boy who flew to America for pioneering treatment to fight a rare form of cancer is celebrating after scans showed his tumour has gone.

Tom Blakemore, of Halesowen, battled the inoperable growth by undergoing hours of gruelling treatment in Florida.

Scans have come back clear after he has been in remission for nearly a year.

The youngster, of Hillcrest Avenue, is now looking forward to starting at Halesowen's Windsor High in September, after catching up on his schoolwork despite missing months of lessons.

He is also playing football regularly again for the Brierley Hill Bullets and even went for a ride in a Ferrari at Silverstone at a charity event.

Tom said: "It's been hard but I'm enjoying being back with my friends and going to school."

His father Simon, a self-employed scaffolder, said: "He is doing so well and the scans have come back clear so far apart from a bit of scar tissue. He is really back up and running now and life is getting back to normal."

Improved

"Not only has he got back to his original level with schoolwork, he's even improved his grades now. He has worked so hard."

Tom was diagnosed with Rhabdomyosarcoma in January last year after suffering from headaches and dizziness. Doctors found the tumour behind Tom's face, where the skull meets the spine. Because of the unusual position of the tumour, he needed an intense and accurate form of treatment.

The NHS paid for Tom and his parents to travel to a specialist clinic in Jacksonville, Florida for pioneering Proton Therapy.

His story is now being used as part of a campaign for a bid for a proton unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, which would cost between £75million to £100m. He will continue having scans every three months for the next year - and check-ups for five years - to make sure the tumour does not return

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Tom Blakemore with dad Simon and mum Jane

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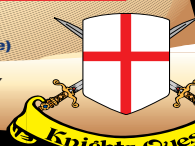
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Families turn out to sea all the fun of the day



Playing in the sandpit Sarah Brookes with her children Walter, four, and Elizabeth, aged seven



Having seaside fun with giant lobsters are friends Ella Baldocks and Emily Bennett, both aged six



Jane Morley has fun with her giant bubbles

A Punch and Judy shows and street performances were among the attractions at Halesowen's annual seaside themed fun day.

Hundreds of families turned out to enjoy the event which took place on Somers Square in the town centre at the weekend.

Other attractions at the event including stilt walkers dressed as lobsters, a sandpit which proved popular with youngsters and face-painting.

The Mayor of Dudley Councillor Michael Evans said: "Halesowen by the Sea was a tremendous success and very well attended. Parents and children alike really enjoyed the town centre activities and entertainment."

A similar event was held last month in Brierley Hill. It was the latest seaside event to be held in the borough. Earlier this year children also got the chance to play in the sand at Himley hall for the annual under fives day.

A specially-built beach was brought in for the occasion - and donkey rides completed the theme.

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Wizard help from Potter star



Harry Potter star Mark Williams is starring in a film with young people from Dudley

Harry Potter star Mark Williams – who played the father of the Weasley family – gave up a day from his busy schedule to make a film with a group of Black Country youngsters.

The actor did not charge for his stint helping youngsters from Kingswinford's Chatback Productions, which gives a voice to young people in care, as well as to the birth children of foster parents.

The 51-year-old star threw himself into filming with around 25 teenagers at Millennium Point, Birmingham, taking the

role of a chat show host. The Bromsgrove-born star, who played Arthur Weasley and was also in the Fast Show, was asked what he thought of the youngsters.

He joked in a Black Country accent: "They'm all roit – they'll do. They could all get a part in Harry Potter – if they were making any more of them."

Chatback Productions has won national acclaim over the last four years.

Chelsea Grimason, aged 15, of Kinver, said: "I'd watched him for 10 years – he's so legendary – but he's really friendly."

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Luke's metal moorhens on trail



Luke with one of his moorhens

A series of 50 life-size moorhens, sculpted out of steel, has been unveiled as part of a £35,000 heritage trail winding through the Black Country.

Local artist Luke Perry has added the miniature sculptures to a trail which stretches from Blowers Green Bridge, Pear Tree Lane, Dudley, through Bumble Hole Nature Reserve on the Sandwell border to the Gorsty Hill Tunnel, Old Hill.

Some of the moorhens have been named after children who helped install them, including Josh, Jade and Jake at the entrance to Bumble Hole Nature Reserve.

A total of 32 larger sculptures have already been installed along the trail, alongside the Dudley No 2 Canal, including one sculpture of a man flushing a toilet, which was inspired by the former Doulton Pottery Works in Rowley Regis which made cisterns and toilet bowls.

The 6ft 6in artwork is one of six 'wayfinders' that point the way along the canals.

Blackbrook Bridge features another such wayfinder, a sculpture of a miner to stress the industry's importance in the area.

Other sculptures act as interpretation panels and mile markers, such as one of a Toll Man at the toll building off Doulton Road, who has been fashioned as if he is vandalising the graffiti-hit building, in a nod to modern artist Banksy. Another sculpture between Powke Lane and Garretts Lane pays homage to the first female business owner in the Black Country, widowed mother-of-four Eliza Tinsley.

Luke, aged 28, of Wollaston, Stourbridge, set up his firm, Industrial Heritage Stronghold in Cradley Heath three years ago, creating artwork championing the Black Country.

He said, the moorhens are in and around the canal towpath.

Soldiers complete 16-hour challenge

dudleychrons@expressandstar.co.uk

Soldiers from the Black Country who returned from the Afghanistan battlefield just weeks ago completed a 92-mile endurance challenge for charity at the weekend.

The group of 20 soldiers from the Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry's Dudley-based A Squadron cycled, ran and canoed their way through three Midland counties in an attempt to raise more than £1,000 for ABF The Soldier's Charity. Setting off from Stafford, relay groups cycled to Lincomb Lock, Stourport.

There they got in canoes to paddle their way to Worcester.

They finished the challenge after 16 hours, at 10pm, in Warwick Market Place where they were greeted by the mayoress.

Cpt Paul Davey, who organised the Yeomanry Triathlon event, said he was "delighted" with how the day had gone.

"It was brilliant. We went through and finished comfortably in the time we were aiming for," he said.

Demanding

"It was very challenging, and very demanding, but it was a fantastic event for a very good cause."

Among the soldiers taking part was Lt Cpl Matthew Burns, aged 23, from Colesey, who joined the Dudley TA six years ago.

He said: "I wanted to take part in this as it was a challenge for us, as well as raising money for a good cause."

Father-of-two – and expecting a third – Sgt Andy Morris, 39, from Quarry Bank, was also in the group.

He said he has been with the TA for 15 years, and now works full-time as a storeman and driver for the centre based in Vicar Street, Dudley. He returned from Afghanistan in April after a six-month tour, having visited Iraq in 2003.

"I thought I'd join in with this event as it's a worthwhile charity," he added.

Many of the soldiers who were part of the recent tour were honoured by The Queen at the Yeomanry's homecoming parade earlier this month in recognition of their work in Helmand.

"The Queen's presentation of medals to members of the RMLY was an immensely proud and hugely important event for us," added Cpt Davey.

To donate visit www.justgiving.com/RMLY



Members of the Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry at the finishing point which was at Lincomb Lock in Stourport

Fossil festival is expecting crowds

Thousands of people are expected to flock to Dudley for the town's annual Rock and Fossil festival next month.

It will take place on September 24 and 25 council chiefs have revealed. The festival, the largest of its kind in the Midlands, will see exhibitors showcase everything from rocks, fossils and gems to jewellery and children's books.

Organisers have also announced the event will include lectures and talks from geology and palaeontology experts from across the country.

Activities will take place at Dudley Museum and Art Gallery and Dudley Concert Hall.

Family entertainment, including an appearance by Dudley Zoo and Castle's small animals collection, face painting, fossil casting, fossil identification sessions, a magician, T-shirt printing and craft workshops, will feature.

Armoury

Visitors will also be able to turn their hand to bird box making and enjoy an armoury display.

Environment chief Councillor David Stanley, said: "The Rock and Fossil festival is the largest regional event of its kind, attracting thousands of visitors over the weekend. This year's event will be bigger and better than ever before with something for everyone to enjoy. It will be a fantastic two days with plenty of activities for all the family."

"There will be face painting, fossil casting, fossil identification and craft workshops, along with the opportunity to buy fossils, minerals and gems."

On September 24, the event will run from 10am until 5pm while it will finish an hour earlier on the second day. Admission will be £2.50 for adults and £1.50 for children.

Family tickets, for two adults and up to three children will be £7.50. For details log on to www.dudley.gov.uk

Two jailed for growing drug

Two illegal immigrants who were "gardeners" for a cannabis farm containing £429,000 worth of plants which were growing inside a Midlands industrial estate have been jailed.

When police officers raided the premises in Coombs Road, Halesowen they found there were 1,313 plants growing inside seven rooms, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

Mrs Sati Ruck, prosecuting, told the hearing that the plants were at various stages of growth and there was a highly sophisticated hydroponic system.

The potential yield from the illegal crop was 48.5 kilos and Hung Le and Luong Vu were found hiding behind rubbish bins by police officers.

Le, aged 42, and Vu, 40, both Vietnamese-born and of no fixed address admitted producing cannabis.

Judge Jonathan Gosling jailed Le for 28 months and Vu for 22 months and told them it was an extremely serious offence because of the significant amount of cannabis being grown.

Mrs Ruck said the pair had both entered the UK illegally and they were now facing deportation on completion of their sentences.

Mr Jas Mann, defending Le, said he had been promised an income to send back to his family.

Mr Harbinder Lally, defending mother-of-two Vu, said she had learned a hard lesson.

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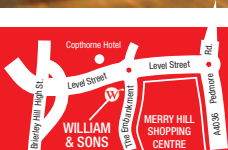
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Plans to beat parking problem

Plans to tackle a parking "nightmare" around a Dudley hospital are set to be rubber-stamped by councillors after years of complaints from residents.

The restrictions are intended to deter drivers from parking in streets near Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley. Residents say staff and visitors continue to clog the surrounding streets with cars, despite the opening of a 691-space car park at the site. They have welcomed the plans – but say they need to be enforced as soon as possible.

Access would be restricted in some roads other than for residents, while

parking would be banned in others.

The council recently held a public consultation and received 120 messages from householders supporting the plans. But bosses at Russells Hall had opposed the idea.

Now the plans, which will cost about £38,000, are due to be discussed at Central Dudley Area Committee in October. If approved, they will go before a meeting of the full council. Christina Brett, a 38-year-old mother-of-five, of Byron Street, said: "It is an absolute nightmare here so the sooner something is done the better. I'm happy that we seem to be moving in the right direction but it

is taking a long time. They are parked here from 6.30am to late at night and we struggle to get near our homes."

The plans include restricted access to Pearee Close, Dereton Close, Abbottsford Drive, Hilderic Crescent and Elgar Crescent and waiting restrictions in Middlepark Road, The Oval, Ashenhurst Road and Kingswinford Road on weekdays from 10-11am and 2-3pm.

A loading ban in High Street, Pen-snett, is suggested on weekdays from 7.30-9.30am and 4.30-6.30pm. Double yellow lines are proposed in Tennyson Street, Milton Street and Byron Street.

Arsonists leave a trail of devastation



Wayne Kelly stands amid the devastation



The fire damage at numbers 24, 26 and 28 St James's Avenue



Burned-out tyres and fence panels left after the arson attack



The remains of a classic Vespa scooter

A fireball left a trail of devastation after arsonists set fire to land next to a row of houses.

Classic cars and gardens were destroyed during the blaze in St James's Avenue, Rowley Regis, just before 6.30pm on August 4.

However, the grass fire quickly spread to three properties with flames at least 20ft high destroying gardens, windows and gutting at the homes.

A vintage car collection, believed to include an E-Type Jaguar, MG, a Triumph, Vespa and classic motorbikes was destroyed. As the blaze hit one of the cars it erupted into a huge fireball, melting window frames and gutters.

Residents assessed the damage at the scene, which was littered with remains of the vehicles, including burned-out engines and twisted metal, while melted guttering hung from two of the worst-hit homes.

The worst-affected property on St James Avenue, which was closest to the open land and housed the classic cars, had three back windows boarded up after glass had shattered, while large cracks were visible in a second home.

Grass was also left blackened and scorched where the fire had started and spread, while homes remained smoke-logged.

Resident Alison Wood, whose garden was completely destroyed, raised the alarm. Her property sits in the middle of the three homes affected.

The 34-year-old NHS worker, who lives with partner Wayne Kelly, aged 35, and 11-year-old son Keelan Wood, said: "I could see smoke and thought someone was burning their rubbish or having a barbecue, but it was really thick smoke. I came down the road and the grass was all ablaze and I saw all our fence go up and into a big fireball."

"I moved my car quickly, but it got all of my neighbour's vintage cars. He has lost so much. It has literally wiped out all of our back gardens and our roofs."

Inhalation

Son Keelan, a pupil at St Michael's School in Curral Road, Rowley Regis, who suffers with asthma, has been treated for smoke inhalation.

Ms Wood's partner Wayne said he thought the fire was a barbecue at first. The council worker said: "I thought to myself, that's getting a bit big, then I suddenly realised what was happening and I raced down the bank and started to try to put it out with my feet, stamping on it, but that did no good at all, it was useless."

"Then we grabbed the hose and tried

that but again that did no good.

"Within a matter of minutes it had reached the houses. I thought the house was going to go. We tried to rescue the cars, but there was so much smoke and heat we just couldn't do it. The firemen put it out really quickly and they saved our houses. The firemen said if it had been another five minutes the roofs of the houses would have caught fire."

Mr Kelly said he himself lost the hard top for his MG car which completely melted.

He also lost a push bike, all of his tools, three lawnmowers and all his garden fencing. Decking, a garden shed, patio furniture and even washing hanging on the clothes line has also been destroyed. The least seriously affected property had damage to its garden fence. Ms Wood added: "The scary thing is, if this had happened of a night time, I don't think we would have got out alive, it just spread that quickly."

"At the end of the day we are still here, that's the main thing. It could have been a lot worse."

Crews from Cradley Heath, Oldbury and Brierley Hill attended. Cradley Heath crew commander Andy Pincher said: "They were very lucky, it might have been a different story if they had been older people."

Crews used a main jet, two hose reels and six breathing apparatus.

Manufacturer set to expand

An historic Black Country manufacturing firm is expanding its site by a third, creating 14 jobs after bouncing back from the economic downturn.

Bosses at Isaac H Grainger & Son Ltd, which has been in the Black Country since 1864, will transform the vacant Total Service Station on Gawne Lane, Cradley Heath, into extra offices and a car park next to their current engineering works. The

move will boost the company's payroll from 53 to 67, after winning approval from Sandwell Council planners.

The petrol station lay vacant for 18 months but bosses seized the chance to buy and expand after the pumps were decommissioned and issues surrounding the sale of the site ironed out. Ivan Grainger, a director of the company who has worked at the firm for 32 years, said the move illustrated

its recovery from losing 20 per cent turnover. The 48-year-old father-of-two said: "The company has progressed well over the last few years and once the site became available to buy, as it was adjacent, we thought it was a good investment for the future. We will be expanding and the fact that it is possible is down to the hard work of our staff during a very difficult two or three years."

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Rare Babes v Wolves programme in auction

One of the rarest football match programmes in the world is expected to fetch up to £7,000 when it goes up for auction next week at an hotel in the Midlands.

The programme was printed for the abandoned match between Wolves and Manchester United on February 8, 1958, which was called off because of the Munich air disaster. The air crash on February 6 claimed the lives of eight United players from

dudleychrons@expressandstar.co.uk the legendary young and gifted team nicknamed the Busby Babes, including Dudley's Duncan Edwards.

He died in hospital 15 days after the tragedy. Twenty of the 44 people on board were killed.

The programme for the Old Trafford fixture went under the hammer today at the Cameo Suite of the Coleshill Hotel in Coleshill.

Robert Adcock from Sporting Memory's Worldwide Auctions said: "It is the rarest programme for both clubs and one of the rarest in the football programme collecting world."

"It is commonly assumed that most of the programmes were destroyed as they named many of the players who died in the plane crash in the team line-ups. Due to the circumstances this programme is valued at £5,000 to £7,000."

Its front cover features a photograph in reference to a previous game between Manchester United and Ipswich Town.

Former Wolves player Ted Farmer, aged 71, said: "Wolves and Manchester United were fighting to be the best and they were equals in the 1950s. Whether Wolves would have been the best team of the decade had the Busby Babes on that plane lived we will just never know."

"I knew Duncan Edwards well and I believe he would have been the greatest player of all time if he had lived."



The wreckage of the Elizabethan Airliner



Utd players boarding the ill-fated BEA aircraft in Belgrade



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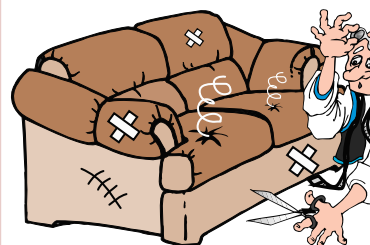
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Man, 42, is jailed for attack

A man has been jailed after attacking a teenager and a woman with a baseball bat, seemingly "taking the law into his own hands" when his daughter returned home upset.

Richard Marsh, aged 42, went out in his van to find those responsible and confront them over what had happened, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

But rather than just speak to them he had "seen the red mist", hitting the 17-year-old male, who cannot be named, on the shoulder.

He also struck a woman, Sarah Blakemore, who was with the teenager. Marsh, of Quarry Bank High Street, pleaded guilty to charges of common assault and grievous bodily harm at an earlier hearing.

He was sentenced to 28 months jail for the GBH and two months for the assault charge to be served consecutively. Mrs Sati Ruck, prosecuting, said the incident had taken place in Quarry Bank High Street at around 5.15pm on October 25.

Mr Gurdeep Garcha, defending, said his client was genuinely remorseful for what he had done. "In a few moments of madness he let his heart rule his head."

A race against time to get anchor back

Volunteers face a race against time to get a replica of the Titanic anchor back in the community where the original one was made.

It is hoped the 18ft iron anchor, that was made in Sheffield, could be back in Netherton in time for the Nautical Day and Dudley Council says it is working on meeting the deadline but, with only six weeks to go, it still stands at the Black Country Living Museum.

Formal planning permission still needs to be granted by planners before it can be moved.

Environment chief Councillor David Stanley said the council was working with volunteers to get the anchor back in time.

The Netherton Regeneration Strategy Group have organised the Nautical Day on September 17. It will feature market stalls, street theatre, and a display on the history of the Titanic.

Over the last year residents have held public meetings over the issue and even made T-shirts emblazoned with the message "1911-2011. Anchoring Netherton's Future".

Councillor Tracy Wood, who has

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led the campaign, said: "We are hopeful that the anchor will be back in time and it is my understanding that the planning process is just a formality."

The anchor will be erected on a plinth on a grassed area outside the Savoy Centre in Netherton.

Thousands lined the route from Dudley to Netherton during the summer as a television programme retraced its original journey taken in 1911.

Designed

A recreation of the anchor, originally designed and built by Netherton manufacturers Noah Hingley & Sons, was carried through the town.

The reconstruction of its original journey started from the site of the former Dudley Railway Station off Castle Hill. But after only two hours the replica was transported to the museum.

The replica anchor was made as part of a series on Channel Four called Titanic: The Mission.

Councillor Stanley said: "We are working with the Netherton Regeneration Strategy Group to get the anchor back in time."

Bags of help from youngsters

Youngsters collected six bags of litter from around their school in less than two hours as part of a nationwide scheme to keep streets tidy.

More than 80 pupils at Lutley Primary School, Halesowen, took part in the Big Tidy Up event.

Armed with bags, litter pickers and brushes, youngsters cleaned up around the school grounds before venturing outside to remove rubbish in green areas. They collected six bags of rubbish with one filled entirely with recyclable items.

It is the third time the school in Brookwillow Road, has taken part in the scheme. They traditionally stage the litter pick in the week before the six week holiday.

Teaching assistant and event organiser Liz Cole said: "We like to do it this time of year because it leaves the school nice and tidy before we break up."

Ideally we would like to stage more events of this kind and it is something I am working on at the moment. The children worked really hard and the school grounds and surrounding areas now look absolutely spotless."



Reece Gillard, Eve Higgins, Neve Kelly and Ryan Bevan get ready for the litter pick

All police stations to face review

A review of all 109 stations across the West Mercia force has been launched by Chief Constable David Shaw. Facilities in Hagley and Wyre Forest are among those being looked at.

Though he says there are no immediate plans to shut any stations, Mr Shaw said he could not rule out job losses as the force tries to save £34 million. He said the review would see whether stations give the "best value for money" with their current opening hours and staffing levels.

The news comes amid concerns that Hagley station, which has no front desk, is already undermanned. Visitors must ring a bell, which puts them through to Bromsgrove. Bewdley also has a similar set-up with Kidderminster, which is currently open from 8am to 10pm every day, while Stourport is staffed from 10am to 2pm Monday to Saturday.

Pressures

Mr Shaw, who recently took his new role, said: "We need to look at whether police stations are open for the right hours and if staff are used in the right places."

"With pressures on officers dealing with serious incidents and 999 calls, it may not always be best to have them waiting in a station that is not very busy."

It was recently revealed that 29 burglaries and 30 vehicle crimes were recorded in 2010 in Hagley – but not one was solved.

Hagley Parish Council chairman Steve Colella said: "We want reassurances that there will be no effect on frontline services."

Up to 450 police officer and community support officer posts are expected to be axed by West Mercia by 2015. Mr Shaw said: "These are very difficult times but I can reassure the public that they will still be served well by their police force."

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thechronicle

Youth admits stealing metals

A youth stole lead and copper from a Black Country house left empty while renovation work was being carried out, a court heard.

Dean Groom, aged 18, climbed on to the garage roof at the property in Round Hill, Sedgley, to steal lead flashing and copper on June 27.

Dudley Magistrates Court heard last week the house had then been entered through a back window where more metal was taken along with power tools, food and alcohol.

Groom, of Cross Lane, Beacon Estate, Sedgley, pleaded guilty to one charge of burglary and another of theft.

Magistrates adjourned the case until August 12 for a pre-sentence report to be drawn up.

He will also be sentenced for an unrelated matter of handling stolen goods.

Miss Maxine MacIntosh, prosecuting, said: "The house was empty at the time despite the lighting and a

radio programmed to come on at a certain time.

"A neighbour reported seeing lead flashing had been pulled away from the garage roof before 6am on the day in question.

"A little later, around 6.20am, two males were seen on the garage roof."

Mrs Nishi Kumar, defending, said her client had pleaded guilty to the charges at the first opportunity.

Magistrates said all sentencing options would be kept open.

Theatre to tell topsy turvey tale

A new theatre production of The Terribly Topsy Turvey Tales of Nunnery Woods has been organised for children across Worcestershire.

Four shows will be held at the Countryside Centre in Nunnery Woods, Worcester, over August 25 and 26, and will include a tour of the woods where various strange characters will tell exciting stories as they go.

Tanya Feasey, from Worcestershire County Council's Countryside Service said: "This is a very exciting show.

"It will also be a new and exciting way for both young and the young-at-heart to explore the Worcester woods in a new way." To book, call the county council on 01905 766155 or 01905 765754.

School post

Dudley Council is taking on a new educational psychologist to work with borough children. The post, will cost between £46,000 and £56,000, and is being created to help meet demand from schools. It will be temporary until March 2012.

Mum's the word, but quietly now

Calm reigns in these mothers' households now - after they graduated from a parenting course.

Seventeen women - all caring for children aged between five and 16 in the Dudley borough - took part in a free, six-week course at the Savoy Centre, Nether-ton, Dudley.

Mrs Edith Rodgers, aged 39, of Woodside Road, Dudley, mother of two boys with learning difficulties, Mitchell, aged 15, and Ronan, nine, was among the graduates.

She said she often used to shout at them if they did something wrong.

"But the course has helped me to talk to them instead and keep my voice lowered," she said.

"The kids are responding better and it's calm in the house, whereas it used to be quite tense. My husband Christopher is appreciating the difference too."

Dudley Council's parent support team led the weekly sessions, which gave mothers the opportunity to develop parenting skills and share tips and experiences.



Edith Rogers, back row third from left, with other mothers and staff celebrate finishing their course in parenting skills outside the Savoy Centre, Dudley

Police help on preventing number plate thefts

Halesowen police are organising their second event to try to crack down on number plate thefts in the town.

Officers are working with Halesowen-based Audi motors and Halfords, who will be on hand at Shell petrol station on Manor

Way on Saturday between 11am - 3pm to help motorists fit free specialist tamper proof screws. Pc Sunny Cheema, said: "Officers will be available to speak to motorists about vehicle safety and crime prevention during the day."



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New boss appointed for trust

The health trust which runs three Worcestershire hospitals has appointed a new interim chief executive. Dr Mark Goldman will take up the post left vacant by John Rostill, who retired this week.

Dr Goldman was previously chief executive at the Heart of England NHS Foundation.

He will oversee the work at Kidderminster Hospital, the Alexandra in Redditch and Worcestershire Royal Hospital in Worcester. He will be helping the hospital trust to work on its bid to become a Foundation Trust which will give it more freedom to run its own services and manage its finances.

The chairman of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, Harry Turner, said: "His experiences with (health regulator) Monitor and what it takes to become a successful Foundation Trust will be beneficial to us as we move forward," he said.

A permanent chief executive is expected to be named in September to start work in the New Year.

Call for bids to get funding

Rural areas of Wyre Forest can submit bids for European funding designed to support local projects improving life for people in the countryside.

The Leader Programme is accepting bids from formally-established groups, charities and businesses.

Wyre Forest, Malvern Hills and Wychavon districts are eligible to apply for the scheme. Call 01905 822013.

Ex-police chief is honoured



Michael Holder

Front, Lillian Holder and director of nursing Denise McMahon with Michael's sister, Joan Dunn, son Andrew Holder, grandson Laurie Holder and daughter Nicola Perks

A former police chief has been honoured after his family and friends raised thousands of pounds for a new day room at a Dudley hospital in his memory.

Relatives of Michael Holder, an ex-chief superintendent of West Midlands Police, gathered at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital for the unveiling of the room.

It will be used to help in the recovery of stroke patients.

Mr Holder died at the hospital in 2008 after suffering two strokes. He was 64. His

wife Lillian, son Andrew and daughter Nicola praised the care he received.

They along with his friends and former colleagues have raised more than £4,500 to help equip the room with a table, chairs, pictures, a TV, radio and CD player.

Mr Holder, from Wollescote, first joined the police as a cadet at the age of 16.

Mrs Holder, 67, said: "The family decided we wanted to give something back to other patients who were in a similar position to Michael."

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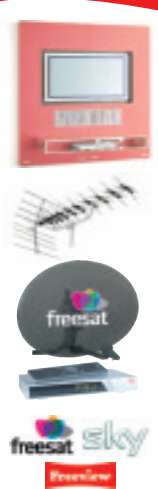
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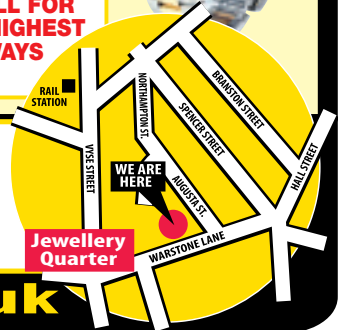
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Warning over screen watching

Parents are being warned of the potential dangers of children watching TV while using gadgets such as smartphones or laptops.

University researchers said children were often "multi-screen viewing" and that a sedentary lifestyle is thought to increase the risk of obesity and mental health problems. The fact that screens can be transported between rooms means there

are now calls for parents to limit the amount of time spent on gadgets. It is now possible to watch TV on demand via the internet, play computer games on laptops, hand-held devices or mobile phones, keep in contact with friends using text, Facebook, Skype, and MSN, and to do all this concurrently. Researchers at Bristol and Loughborough universities questioned 63 10 to 11-year-olds and found

the children enjoyed looking at more than one screen at a time. They use a second device to fill in breaks during their entertainment, often talking or texting during adverts or while they were waiting for computer games to load. Dr Russ Jago, from Bristol University, said: "This suggests we need to work with families to develop strategies to limit the overall time spent multi-screen viewing."

Musicians telling tales on charity CD

Tales of the Black Country are being retold by musicians from around the region who have banded together to produce a charity album.

From halcyon days of industry to ghosts at Dudley Castle and from stray ponies around Tipton to Wolverhampton's famous Polish tramp Fred.



Musician and main organiser John Langford with Dudley Cancer Support Manager Chris Barron.

Folklore and stories well known to people in towns across the Black Country have been collated by musician and Gornal businessman John Langford.

The CD called The Black Country and Me has already been flying off the

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shelves making around £1,500 for Dudley Cancer Support at The White House in Ednam Road.

All the songs have been written and performed by Black Country artists who donated their time and music to the project free.

Songwriter Mr Langford, aged 51, from Milking Bank, struck upon the idea after performing at the Folk at the Oak night.

"I'm extremely proud of this CD and the excellent songs that have been donated by talented performers in the area," he said.

Generosity

"I'm humbled and grateful for the kindness and generosity that the artists, sponsors and everyone has shown, it makes me very proud to be a Black Country lad."

The night is organised regularly at the Royal Oak pub, School Road, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton.

Mr Langford, who runs steel firm Gornal Products, had previously been involved with cancer charity the Rainbow Breast Reconstruction Group which has links to Dudley Cancer Support.

One of the contributors has been Pete Kelly who lives in Tipton with his song Tipton Pony about the stray he saw regularly outside his home in recent months.

Mr Langford says one of his proudest

moments has been playing with his 16-year-old son James on his track called Joe Darby written with Glenn Tunley.

James is a talented guitarist and performed with his father for the album's launch night on June 3 at the Copthorne Hotel, in Brierley Hill.

A host of other performers including Dave Love, Pete Kelly and Glenn Tunley took to the stage during the night to showcase many tracks off the album.

The Black Country Alphabet song, created by Cradley Heath company TeeT Shirts, also features on the 18-track disc.

Baptist minister Keith Judson has also written a song called Iron and Chains, an industry forged in the Black Country.

Around £750 in sponsorship was raised to cover the production costs of the CD from local businesses.

About 1,000 copies have been produced at £5 each with money going directly to Dudley Cancer Support.

Cancer Support manager Chris Barron said: "We are completely taken aback by the generosity of everyone involved in this project so far, they have all been willing to give up their time to help raise money for us and to raise over £1,500 so far is a wonderful achievement."

For more information or to purchase a CD visit Cancer Support at The White House, 10 Ednam Road, Dudley, DY1 1JX or call on 01384 231232.

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thechronicle

27st Vikki sheds the weight and the years

Eight years ago, Vikki Billingham could barely manage a trip to the shops. At 27st, not only did she struggle to get around, she was too embarrassed to go out very often.

The mother-of-two found it difficult to get clothes to fit her size 32 figure. But ultimately, her weight was preventing her from being active with her young daughter. She struggled to take her to the playground without getting out of breath.

This spurred her to take action to lose weight. Now, with the help of diet magazines and a Black Country slimming group, the super slimmer is down to a svelte 10st 9lbs – and a size 12 – and loves nothing more than a trip out to get the latest fashions.

"It got to a certain point and I just had enough – I could hardly do anything with my daughter Jessica, who was three at the time, and I got sick of how I was living my life," said care assistant Vikki.

"I couldn't get about easily as I'd get out of breath, and shopping was a depressing experience. Finding something that fit was tough and even when you did it didn't look right, so I dressed a lot older than I was."

Younger

"It's so much easier now, it's lovely to be able to walk in a shop and pick anything up and know it will fit. I feel so much younger now than I did back then."

Now aged 38, Vikki's long journey started out with her buying Slimming World magazines for their recipes and cooking them up at home in Ellis Avenue, Brierley Hill. "I was too embarrassed to even go to the groups to start with – I wanted to lose a bit of weight first," she admitted. "I lost about 11st on my own but then started to find the last few stone were really difficult to shift."

"So about four years ago I started going to the group which meets at the Oakfield Centre in Brettell Lane and they gave me the support I needed to keep going."

Before, she said, her diet was full of "all the wrong things" – a lot of bread, fried food and takeaways, and very little fruit and vegetables. Now she cooks everything from scratch eating fresh fruit, vegetables and fish. Her two

dudleychrons@expressandstar.co.uk

children, Jessica, 12, and James, three, also enjoy healthy eating. Jessica has lost half a stone after going to the group meetings with Vikki.

As well as the diet, Vikki goes walking and in January this year joined a gym to improve her fitness and lose the two pounds that will take her to her ideal weight.

"It has changed my life completely – I do things now that I never would have dreamed of doing just a few years ago," she said.



The new slimmer
Vikki Billingham



Vikki when she weighed nearly 27 stones

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The beaches and sea front are a short walk away.

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 - Dunster & Minehead

4 Days • 3 Nights:
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Brighton - Royal Albion Hotel

The Regency resort of Brighton has a unique atmosphere. There are a wide range of antique shops, selection of good restaurants and a lovely sea front. Don't miss the historic 'Lanes'. The Royal Albion Hotel sits directly opposite the pier.

- Included excursions:**
- Arundel & Worthing
 - Lewes

4 Days • 3 Nights:
26 August from £159.95



Bath & Longleat

Georgian Bath has a great range of attractions including the Roman Baths, Bath Abbey and the Jane Austen Centre. On day 2 we visit Longleat and include a journey through the renowned safari park. Afterwards you can view one of the most

2 Days • 1 Night:
27 August from £79.95



Eastbourne - Mansion Lions Hotel

Eastbourne offers spectacular coastal scenery and countryside. The top class Mansion Hotel is on the sea front overlooking Grand Parade.

Included excursions:

- Battle and the Cinque port of Rye
- with its enchanting cobbled streets & Mediaeval church
- Brighton

5 Days • 4 Nights:
29 August from £299.95,
17 October from £279.95



Torquay - Waters Edge Hotel

The popular resort of Torquay has a superb coastline, attractive harbour and a wide selection of facilities. The Waters Edge Hotel is set back from Lymington Beach and has one of the finest locations in Tor Bay.

Included excursions:

- South Hams and Salcombe
- Plymouth

5 Days • 4 Nights:
29 August from £169.95



Kentish Rover - Bridgewood Manor Hotel

Enjoy the sweeping sandy beaches, long promenades and host of traditional seaside attractions. The Bridgewood Manor Hotel is designed around a wonderful inner courtyard and has an air of luxury.

Included excursions:

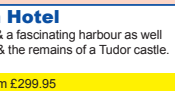
- North Kent coastline and touring the twin resorts of Whitstable and Herne Bay
- Visit to the southern coastlines of Kent
- Royal Tunbridge Wells

4 Days • 3 Nights: 30 September from £169.95

Weymouth - Carlton Hotel

Weymouth has a fabulous beach & a fascinating harbour as well as some narrow shopping streets & the remains of a Tudor castle. It is a great place for a holiday.

8 Days • 7 Nights: 20 August from £299.95



Scarborough & York - Grand Hotel

Scarborough is set on the North Yorkshire coast. There is a beautiful park, a lake and Mediaeval castle. The Grand Hotel is one of Scarborough's landmark buildings. It overlooks the harbour & south bay. Regular evening entertainment.

Included excursions:

- North Yorkshire Moors and Whitby
- Bridlington • York

5 Days • 4 Nights:
22 August from £189.95, 05 September - from £159.95



Isle of Wight Weekend - Shanklin

Shanklin is situated on the south east corner of the beautiful Isle of Wight. The Medehamstede Hotel is set a short stroll from the cliff lift in the resort of Shanklin.

Included excursion:

- Ventnor, Alum Bay and the famous Needles, returning via Cowes

3 Days • 2 Nights:
09 September from £89.95



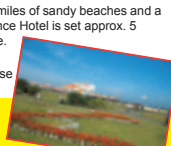
Great Yarmouth & Norfolk Broads Cruise

Great Yarmouth offers miles and miles of sandy beaches and a prime maritime heritage. The Prince Hotel is set approx. 5 minutes walk from the town centre.

Included excursions:

- Norfolk Broads and scenic cruise
- Historic Norwich

5 Days • 4 Nights:
12 September from £159.95,
10 October from £149.95



Blackpool Illuminations Break

Hotel La Tour

Blackpool is the north's biggest, brightest and best resort - packed with excitement and enjoyment. The Hotel La Tour is set in central Blackpool.

3 Days • 2 Nights:
16 September, 28 October
from £89.95

5 Days • 4 Nights: 19 Sept, 03 October from £149.95



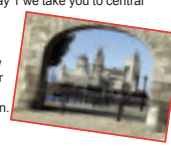
Strawberry Fields & Penny Lane

with visit to Liverpool

Enjoy a visit to the dynamic city of Liverpool & soak up the atmosphere of the Beatles. On day 1 we take you to central Liverpool.

Don't miss the Albert Dock and many of the new buildings created as part of the vibrant new Liverpool. During the day join our optional excursion on a ferry across the Mersey - £8 per person. On day 2 we have included a guided Beatles' coach tour.

2 Days • 1 Night: 24 September from £79.95



Fort William & the Isle of Skye

Croft Anna Hotel

Fort William is situated on the southern end of Great Glen beneath towering Ben Nevis. The Croft Anna Hotel has a great location by the Loch. Features include a panoramic lounge, 2 bars, terrace and entertainment on most evenings.

Included excursions:

- Journey on West Highland line to Mallaig
- Coach tour through glorious scenery to arrive at Inverness • Isle of Skye

7 Days • 6 Nights: 05 September from £389.95



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from just
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Paris Weekend with visit to Versailles

Enjoy a visit to the world's most enchanting city. See the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame and the Arc de Triomphe. We stay for 2 nights at the Forest Hill Hotel, Meudon (or similar).

Included excursions:

- Transfer to central Paris. Optional guided morning excursion - £9.95 pp
- Visit to Versailles

3 Days • 2 Nights:
19 August, 16 Sept, 21 Oct from £129.95
11 November from £99.95



Ostend Free Bar Breaks

Ostend has it all - miles of sandy beaches, delightful promenades, sea front cafes and colourful markets. We stay for 3 nights on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis at the New Astoria Hotel. A 'free bar' with local draught beer, red or white wine or soft drinks between 20.30 hrs and midnight is included.

Optional excursions:

- Sluis & Bruges - £9.95 per person
- Amsterdam - £19.95 per person

Special Offer: Book both excursions for just £24 pp

4 Days • 3 Nights:
26 August & 21 October from £199.95



Rhine Valley & the Black Forest with special Black Forest Party Night including free bar

Enjoy a holiday combining the delights of the picturesque areas. We stay for 2 nights in the Rhine Valley. During your stay we have an optional visit to the Moselle Valley - £19.95pp. On day 3, after breakfast, we take you on a Rhine cruise. Afterwards we make our way to the Black Forest. Tonight we have a special Black Forest evening with a dinner featuring Black Forest specialities followed by a 2 hour free bar between 8.30 and 10.30pm. On day 4 you can join our optional excursion visiting beautiful Lake Titisee, Staufen and delightful Freiburg - £19.95 per person. Special Offer: Book both excursions for just £30pp

5 Days • 4 Nights: 05 Sept & 10 Oct from £199.95



Prague - city of 100 Spires

4* Hotel Duo

Prague boasts a stunning skyline with magnificent views over the River Vltava. There are Mediaeval cobble streets, baroque facades, renaissance palaces and stunning churches. The 4* Hotel Duo has a great range of facilities including a bar, restaurant and sports centre. A metro station is just opposite the hotel entrance.

Included excursion:

Guided tour of Prague

Optional excursions:

- Visit to southern Bohemia and Cesky Krumlov - £19.95 pp
- Charles IV's magnificent country castle - Karlstejn Castle - £9.95 pp
- Northern Bohemia and Karlovy Vary - £19.95 pp

Special Offer: Book all 3 excursions for just £39.95 pp

8 Days • 7 Nights: 17 September from £299.95



Irish Delight - 4* Bettystown Court Hotel

Included excursions:

- Visit to historic Dublin. As well you can join our optional tour of the old Jameson distillery - £16 pp
- Visit to the quaint fishing village of Howth

5 Days • 4 Nights: 25 September from £199.95

Sorrento & the Amalfi Coast

Admire some of Europe's most spectacular scenery. On day 2 we visit the Lake Garda area.

On day 3 we travel through Tuscany to the Sorrento Peninsula area and stay for 5 nights at a 3* hotel on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis. On day 4 you can join our optional visit to Capri, with included guided tour by mini bus - £59.95 pp

On day 5 we have included a tour along the Amalfi Coast - one of the most spectacular coastlines in Europe. We take in Amalfi and Ravelli.

On day 6 you can join our optional visit to Pompei and Vesuvius - £39.95 per person

On day 7 you can join our optional visit to the city of Naples. The city has been declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO. See the narrow streets, mysterious churches, catacombs and caves - £19.95 per person.

10 Days • 9 Nights: 30 September from £399.95



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Continental Christmas Markets



Berlin, Potsdam & Dresden Christmas Markets

7 Days • 6 Nights - 4* Hotel in Berlin
28 November from £379.95

Nuremberg & Wurzburg Christmas Markets

4 Days • 3 Nights - 09 December from £189.95

Budapest Christmas Market

4* Mercure Budapest, Buda

6 Days • 5 Nights - 08 December from £299.95

Black Forest, Switzerland & Alsace

5 Days • 4 Nights - 05 December from £199.95

Paris Christmas Markets

3 Days • 2 Nights - 02 December from £99.95

Luxembourg & Trier Christmas Markets - with Free Bar

4 Days • 3 Nights - 28 November from £189.95

02 December from £199.95

Salzburg Christmas Markets

6 Days • 5 Nights - 03 December from £299.95

Rothenburg & Nuremberg Christmas Markets with Free Bar

4 Days • 3 Nights - 02 & 12 December from £199.95

Mediaeval Prague & Rothenburg Christmas Markets

7 Days • 6 Nights - 03 December from £299.95

Black Forest Christmas Market with Free Bar

4 Days • 3 Nights - 09 December from £189.95

Cologne Christmas Markets with Free Bar

4 Days • 3 Nights - 25 & 28 November, 02 & 09 December from £179.95

Germany's Christmas Markets

4 Days • 3 Nights - 05 & 13 December from £99.95

Bruges, Ostend & Valkenburg Christmas Markets

3 Days • 2 Nights - 09 December from £139.95

Cologne & Aachen Christmas Markets with Free Bar

4 Days • 3 Nights - 25 November from £189.95

12 December from £179.95

Brussels & Bruges Christmas Markets

3 Days • 2 Nights - 25 November from £139.95

Antwerp & Ghent Christmas Markets

4* Crowne Plaza, Antwerp - 3 Days • 2 Nights

09 & 16 December from £119.95

5* Christmas Market Break

5* Kempinski Hotel - Dukes Palace, Bruges

02 December - 3 Days • 2 Nights from £299.95



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Mickey's Magical Fireworks & Bonfire

3 Days • 2 Nights - with 2 Day Hopper Ticket - Disney's

Hotel Santa Fe

03 November from £139.95

Mickey's Magical Fireworks & Bonfire

4 Days • 3 Nights - with 2 Day Hopper Ticket -

Disney's Hotel Santa Fe

03 November from £169.95

Disney Enchanted Christmas

4 Days • 3 Nights - with 2 Day Hopper Ticket -

Disney's Hotel Santa Fe

11, 18, 24 November from £159.95

02, 09, 15 December from £169.95

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19 Aug	North Wales Weekend with included train journey 3 Days • 2 Nights	from £99.95	26 Aug	Ostend Free Bar Break 4 Days • 3 Nights	from £199.95
19 Aug	Paris Weekend 3 Days • 2 Nights	from £129.95	27 Aug	Bath & Longleat 2 Days • 1 Night	from £79.95
20 Aug	Blackpool - La Tour Hotel 2 Days • 1 Night	from £39.95	27 Aug	Lido Di Jesolo - Italy included excursions: Venice & Slovenia 8 Days • 7 Nights	from £399.95
22 Aug	Great Little Trains of North Wales Westminster Hotel 5 Days • 4 Nights	from £199.95	27 Aug	Skjegnss - 3 Days • 2 Nights	from £99.95
22 Aug	Isle of Wight - Hotel Marea 5 Days • 4 Nights	from £199.95	27 Aug	Weymouth - Norfolk Hotel 2 Days • 1 Night	from £59.95
22 Aug	Beach Resort Mystery Tour 5 Days • 4 Nights	from £169.95	27 Aug	Gloucester Tall Ships Festival & the Cotswolds - 2 Days • 1 Night	from £89.95
22 Aug	Ostend's Golden Coast 5 Days • 4 Nights	from £199.95	29 Aug	Torquay - Waters Edge Hotel 5 Days • 4 Nights	from £169.95
22 Aug	Scarborough & York - Grand Hotel 5 Days • 4 Nights	from £189.95	29 Aug	Skjegnss - Chatsworth Hotel 5 Days • 4 Nights	from £199.95
22 Aug	Warner Summer Special Cricket St. Thomas 5 Days • 4 Nights	from £299.95	29 Aug	Pontins Gold - Pakefield 5 Days • 4 Nights	from £199.95
22 Aug	Warner Summer Special Norton Grange 5 Days • 4 Nights	from £239.95	29 Aug	Eastbourne - top class Mansion Lions Hotel 5 Days • 4 Nights	from £299.95
26 Aug	Paignton - Torbay Court Hotel 3 Days • 2 Nights	from £99.95	29 Aug	Eastbourne - Good Class Hotel 5 Days • 4 Nights	from £149.95
26 Aug	4* Belgium Break - Brussels, Ghent & Bruges - 3 Days • 2 Nights	from £99.95	29 Aug	Paignton Hoppa's Break Torbay Court Hotel 5 Days • 4 Nights	from £159.95
			03 Sept	Hereford & 'River in the Sky' 2 Days • 1 Night	from £79.95

thechronicle

Between Shades of Gray

- Ruta Sepetys

(Penguin, paperback, £6.99)

A KNOCK in the middle of the night and 15-year-old Lina, her younger brother and their mother are given just 20 minutes to pack whatever is dearest to them and leave their home – forever. For this is Lithuania 1941 and Stalin's military police, the NKVD, are deporting thousands of Lithuanians to Siberia, especially those – like Lina's university professor father – who may object to the Soviet Union invading their homeland, Russia's tiny neighbour.

So begins a living nightmare for Lina and her family, packed together in railway cattle wagons marked in Russian 'thieves and prostitutes', and sent thousands of miles into exile. Only love, hope, her passion for art, and pure willpower can keep Lina alive.

This hard-hitting, deeply moving story is based on the true experiences of many families whose only crime was to be considered potential opponents of the Soviet Empire.

It is a rewarding read for both teenagers and adults, and it can be ranked alongside such books set around the same time as John Boyne's *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and Ian Serraillier's *The Silver Sword*.

Trash - Andy Mulligan

(David Fickling Books, paperback, £5.99)

The dumpsite boys live and scratch a living off a huge rubbish tip on the edge of a city (Manila in The Philippines?), looking for stuff to recycle. Then one day the friends find a lot of money and other items that some very powerful people want to stay hidden. The lads can't even trust the police and their fight for survival begins.

With its unusual setting and story told through the eyes of different narrators, Trash is gripping from beginning to end.

The Death Defying Pepper Roux

- Geraldine McCaughrean

(Oxford University Press, paperback, £6.99)

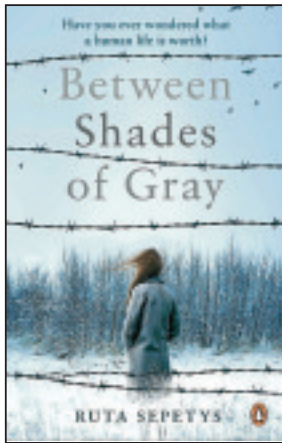
Poor Paul 'Pepper' Roux. His whole family believe his weird aunt's cotside prophecy that he will not live past his 14th birthday – after all, a saint had told her. So when his birthday arrives at his home in France some time in the 1920s (or 30s), with the sullen air of anticipated misery Pepper instead decides to defy death and go on the run from the Grim Reaper. Then things get even weirder for the teenager when people start to mistake him for other people, such as his sea captain father, which lets him set sail on a sea of adventures but with chaos in his wake.

This is an eccentric and quirky novel which will get, and deserves, cult status, suitable also for confident readers close to their teens.

The Midnight Palace - Carlos Ruiz

Zafon (Orion, hardback, £12.99)

There are hints of Asian-style Harry Potter in the supernatural thriller from a Spanish



author better known for his adult fiction. Set in Calcutta, India, in the last years of the British Empire, it tells of a pair of twins with a special destiny, a derelict mansion they name The Midnight Palace, a ghost train, a bird of fire, and a shadowy villain.

Elixir - Hilary Duff (Simon and Schuster, paperback, £6.99)

The former Disney princess and Hollywood actress, known to millions as Lizzie McGuire, obviously fancies some of that Twilight paranormal romance market with this first novel. It's the first of a series with the second in the Elixir saga. Devoted, coming soon.

When the gifted teenage daughter of a prominent politician and famous surgeon takes refuge in the globe-trotting world of a top photojournalist, after her father disappears, she starts to notice shadowy images in her photos of the same beautiful young man.

The set-up is good, the writing less so (so the mysterious man wasn't a ghost writer!) but it is efficiently done.

Amy & Roger's Epic Detour - Morgan Matson (Simon and Schuster, paperback, £6.99)

Some say life isn't about getting somewhere, it's the journey that matters. So it is when broken-hearted Amy, who hasn't been able to get behind the steering wheel of a car since her father's death, sets off on an epic road trip across the USA to her mother's new home on the East Coast.

Driver Roger, son of a family friend, becomes more than a chauffeur and decides to take a very big scenic detour. A good read with movie potential.

Teen reads for the summer holidays

Long Linkin - Lindsey Barraclough (Bodley Head, hardback, £10.99)

A devilishly spooky debut novel with draws its theme from a bloodthirsty folk ballad about a creature that lurks in the countryside, ready to slip into a house to devour children.

In 1950s England a pair of sisters from London are sent to live with their aunt who dwells in a hall near a village in an isolated part of the countryside.

There are local whispers about their aunt being a witch and rumours of horrible goings-on at the hall in days gone by.

Barraclough's style of creepiness owes more to the classic ghost stories of MR James than today's gore merchants, and is all the better for it.

You may want to leave the light on for a while after reading this one at night, whatever your age.

Matched - Ally Condie (Penguin, paperback, £6.99)

In Cassia's ordered society in the future your whole life is arranged for you. Officials tell you who your partner will be, where you will work, how many children you will have, when you will die. But, at the age of 17, Cassia decides that although society has chosen her perfect partner, she's already picked one for herself... and that's just not done.

I liked Cassia's rebellious grandad with his love of the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas ('Do not go gentle into that good night'). But I am not sure that this blend of futuristic romance with a shadow of George Orwell's Big Brother society of 1984 is a complete success.

The Death of King Arthur

- Peter Ackroyd (Penguin, hardback, £20)

With Merlin and Camelot on TV recently, things Arthurian are very in and if the original source material, Sir Thomas Mallory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, seems a little too heavy going then try this masterful condensing of Mallory's sometimes rambling storytelling, designed for a modern audience but in no way dumbed down. Ackroyd retells one of the truly great sagas about a flawed hero who, despite his death, seems to live on forever in our collective imagination.

The Throne of Fire - Rick Riordan (Puffin, hardback, £12.99)

Another blockbuster from the creator of Percy Jackson, Potter's biggest rival for both younger teen readers and pre-teens who can handle a big thick book.

This, however, is not a Percy tale but the second in the Kane Chronicles after *The Red Pyramid*, in which the Kane siblings are mixed up with the Gods of Ancient Egypt who have erupted into the

modern world, rather like the Greek Gods and monsters that Percy has to deal with after his immortals swapped Mount Olympus for New York.

No doubt about it, former teacher Riordan spins an exciting yarn and mythology supplies him with a ready made cast of incredible beings.

Six Days - Philip Webb

(Chicken House, paperback, £6.99)

A cracking sci-fi tale set in a ravaged London where the survivors are employed by the Vlds – their nickname for Europe's new Russian masters – to tear the city down in search of a mysterious relic.

The searchers are known as 'scavs' and ransacking what's left of the old capital is all siblings Cass and Wilbur have ever known.

Then they meet a mysterious stranger and everything changes. Buried under the rubble somewhere is something with the power to end or begin again life on Earth, and they've only got six days to find it.

It's a page-turning thriller for sci-fans with a thing for dystopian futures.

Wish Me Dead - Helen Grant

(Penguin, paperback, £7.99)

A modern gothic fairy tale set in a German town surrounded by the sort of forests the Brothers Grimm would have recognised. Shy Steffi bitterly regrets visiting the cursed house of the witch, where she wanted her wishes to come true. Now they do, with deadly effect, and the wishes have become a curse. An entertaining chiller.

Ghost of a Chance - Rhiannon Lassiter

(Oxford University Press, paperback, £6.99)

A dead girl investigates her own murder but along the way must contend with the other ghosts occupying her ancestral home, some of them sad and some of them – especially the witch – very scary indeed. I gave this a chance but felt it didn't live up to its considerable promise.

Angel Kiss - Laura Jane Cassidy

(Penguin, paperback, £6.99)

More ghostly goings-on. Strange things start to happen to teenager Jacki after she leaves Dublin for life in rural Ireland... headaches, nightmares, visions. Could it be something to do with an unsolved murder in the village years before? Course it could. But there is also a very much living romance for Jacki too in this slowly unfolding supernatural tale.

Reckless - Cornelia Funke

(Chicken House, paperback, £6.99)

The German author of the Inkheart trilogy should appeal to a similar audience with this Gothic adventure drawing on traditional fairy tales but

giving them a twist. It's no coincidence that the brothers at the story's core are named Jacob and Will, the same as the Brothers Grimm.

A boy becomes a beast and a girl's heart is broken in this tale of loyalty and betrayal set between two worlds linked by a mirror, the real world and a strange enchanted place where magic and modern technology mix with disastrous results.

Rockaholic - CJ Skuse

(Chicken House, paperback, £6.99)

Jody is obsessed with rock star Jackson Gatlin, so much so that she has to be in the front row at this gig and is crushed in the moshpit of delirious fans. Carried backstage, add concussion, a totally wired rock star and a Curly-Wurly and next thing, Jody has 'accidentally' kidnapped her rock idol.

Frequently laugh-out-loud funny and with a fair dose of romance, this is an enjoyable read for beach or poolside (or stuck indoors on a rainy day).

Popular - Gareth Russell

(Penguin, paperback, £6.99)

Let the bitching begin... the girls at a posh Irish school vie for the position of most popular, when not texting or social networking, that is.

Russell often sounds convincing in his first in a new series of books but can a guy really capture a girls' world?

The Crowfield Demon - Pat Walsh

(Chicken House, paperback, £6.99)

This sequel to *The Crowfield Curse* returns to Crowfield Abbey where the medieval human world is under threat from a supernatural enemy, and only William and his friends can defend Crowfield. Spooky and thrilling with its roots in folklore, it's a dark treat.

Wood Angel - Erin Bow

(Chicken House, paperback, £6.99)

Set in an unidentified Eastern European land (probably Russia) where superstition is rife and magic is feared, this is about Plain Kate, the wood carver's daughter. The story of the witch-child, her talking cat and a shadow thief has some interesting ideas but the plot is convoluted and the narrative fails really to draw the reader in.

Leon Burakowski

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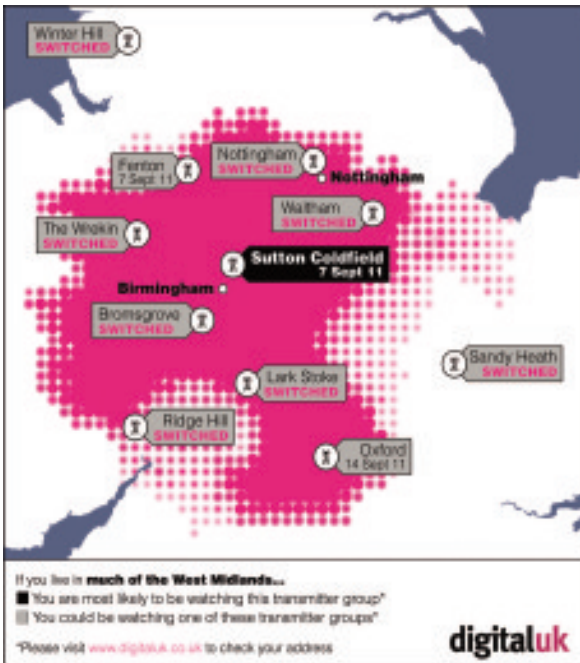


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With just weeks to go until the first analogue TV signals are switched off in the West Midlands, the **Chronicle** has teamed up with Digital UK to provide readers with this special guide to digital TV switchover.

Digital UK



Viewers will need to re-tune to receive programmes

So, how will these changes happen?

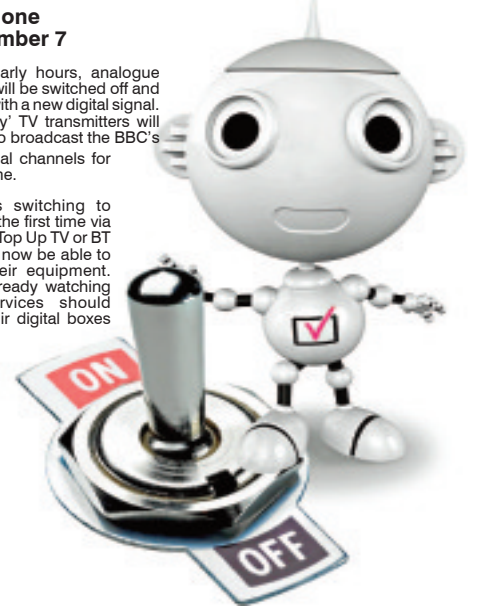
Switchover will happen in two stages. If you currently receive your TV signal through an aerial, in either analogue or digital format (Freeview, Top Up TV, BT Vision), you are probably served by the Sutton Coldfield transmitter group, which switches on the dates below.

Televisions connected to a cable or satellite service are not affected.

Stage one September 7

In the early hours, analogue BBC Two will be switched off and replaced with a new digital signal. Local 'relay' TV transmitters will also start to broadcast the BBC's other digital channels for the first time.

Readers switching to digital for the first time via Freeview, Top Up TV or BT Vision will now be able to set up their equipment. Homes already watching these services should retune their digital boxes or IDTVs.



Stage two September 21

All remaining analogue channels will be switched off and replaced with additional digital services.

Everyone watching Freeview, Top Up TV or BT Vision will need to retune their equipment again to receive all available channels.

On both dates, these changes will happen overnight. For most viewers, services will be restored by the morning.

Households receiving their TV signal from local relay transmitters will receive new digital services later in the day and should tune in for the first time or retune from this point.

What is switchover and when will it all be taking place?

Digital TV switchover is the biggest change in television since the introduction of colour. Analogue signals are about to be switched off and replaced with new digital services.

This will make Freeview available for the first time to thousands of homes watching local 'relay'

transmitters in many areas. Digital UK is the independent organisation set up by the broadcasters to lead the switchover.

Preparing

It provides an advice line and website to help with general questions about getting digital TV and preparing for the switchover.

Peter Monteith, Digital UK's regional manager for the Central TV region, says: "Switchover will change forever how television is broadcast."

"I'm delighted that, very soon, viewers who have previously been unable to get Freeview services will be able to do so for the first time."

"Most people are well prepared – but for those who still have questions, we are here to help."

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How do I re-tune my TV set?



VIEWERS watching Freeview, Top Up TV or BT Vision will need a full retune of their equipment at both stages of switchover in order to continue receiving services.

You should retune from time to time in order to keep your Freeview box up to date. Sometimes channels move around – so if you should lose access to several channels, try retuning.

For a full retune your Freeview, Top Up TV or BT Vision equipment, follow these steps (these instructions are a guide only – each product works slightly differently).

- Switch on your digital box or digital TV
- Press 'menu' on the remote control
- Select 'set up' or 'installation' option
- Select 'first time installation' option (sometimes called 'factory reset', 'full retune' or 'default settings')
- Press 'OK' if your equipment asks if you want to delete all your channels – don't worry this is totally normal

● All channels will be automatically installed. This may take a few minutes, and your equipment may shut down and restart.

After a retune, if you are not receiving your preferred regional service, you are likely to find your preferred services further down the channel list. If you want to make your preferred services easier to find, you can either use the 'favourites' list or 'channel settings'. See your instruction manual for more details.

If you find you are missing some channels or your equipment has stopped working, visit digitaluk.co.uk/retuning for more information. If you can't fix it yourself, you might want to consult friends or family who could do it for you, or otherwise call out an installer (see 'Common questions').

To watch a short video showing you how to retune, and for specific re-tuning instructions for the most popular Freeview products, visit digitaluk.co.uk/retuning.



Some people are eligible for the Switchover Help Scheme, making the change easy for elderly and disabled with practical help

Help is on hand for those in need



THOUSANDS of people in the Central TV region have already taken up help from the Switchover Help Scheme.

Run by the BBC under an agreement with the Government, it's an official scheme which makes switchover easy for older and disabled people by giving practical help to switch one TV in their home.

People are eligible for the help scheme if they are:

- Aged 75 years or over;

- Eligible for attendance or constant attendance allowance, or mobility supplement, or disability living allowance;

- Registered blind or partially sighted;

- Or have been living in a care home for six months or more.

If you're eligible, you will be offered equipment that's easy to use, delivery or installation and a demonstration of how to use it, together with a choice of options.

Your aerial will be checked and

upgraded where it can be, if it's needed. There is a freephone number to call for help while you get used to things.

Most people will be asked to pay £40 towards the standard offer of help. For eligible people on income-related benefits, it's free. Eligible people can also choose from a range of other help scheme options.

If you know an older or disabled person who might still need help to switch to digital TV, you could

lend a helping hand and give them the message about the switchover help scheme. Even if they have digital TV already, they can get help to switch another TV set in their home.

All you need to do to get the help is respond to the information pack which has been sent to every eligible person's home. But you must respond to get the help. The help scheme will close for applications in the Central TV region on October 28, 2011.

astral DIGITAL tv



Get ready for the digital switchover in September

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Switchover: common questions answered

UNDERSTANDABLY, some TV viewers will have a number of questions regarding these changes being made to their programme reception.

Below is a list of some of the more frequently asked questions, complete with answers.

Where can I get face-to-face advice on switchover?

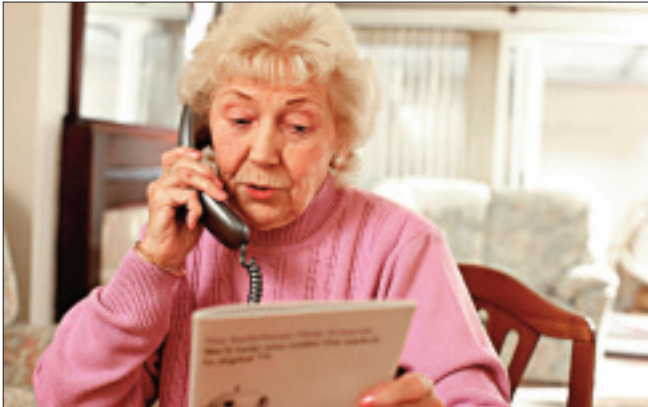
Digital UK has been working closely with charities to organise local advice points during switchover. These will be staffed by trained volunteers and are open to everyone. There are also Digital UK roadshows in the region. To find out where your local advice point or roadshow will be, visit digitaluk.co.uk/centralevents or call 08456 50 50 50.

What about my video recorder?

After switchover, video and analogue DVD recorders will still play back and record, but you won't be able to record one channel while you watch another. If you want to continue doing this after switchover, the simplest way is to get a digital TV recorder. These also allow you to record a whole series at the touch of a button, and pause and rewind live TV.

Will I need a new aerial to receive Freeview?

Most rooftop aerials will be fine after switchover but a small proportion of aerials are likely to need replacing to receive Freeview. Digital UK recommends that you wait until after switchover to see if your aerial needs replacing in order to avoid having unnecessary work carried out. You can check



Preparing your television for the imminent digital switchover isn't nearly as daunting as it seems whether your existing aerial is likely to be suitable for receiving digital by visiting the aerial test page on teletext page 284.

Where can I find a good aerial installer?

Look for a Registered Digital Installer (RDI) with the 'digital tick' logo. Go to rdi-lb.tv or call Digital UK on 0845 650 50 50 for more information. If you can't find an RDI locally, look for someone with Associate RDI or CAI Plus status – or ask your local electrical retailer.

What channels will I get?

Which channels you receive will depend on which transmitter you receive. Viewers served by a local 'relay' transmitter will receive

around 15 Freeview channels for the first time. These will include BBC One, BBC Two, ITV 1, Channel 4 and Five, plus all the other channels from the BBC (those funded by the licence fee) and some other services from public-service broadcasters. Viewers served by a larger 'main' transmitter will receive these channels as well as some extra services from commercial broadcasters. These extra channels are also available via satellite. You can check which channels are available in your area by using the postcode checker at digitaluk.co.uk, or by calling 08456 50 50 50. This also gives you information about satellite and cable options in your area.



Whichever method you choose, going digital is a must to keep watching your TV

There's more than one way to keep you in the picture

If you only receive five or fewer analogue channels through an aerial on any of your sets, you'll need to think about converting them for switchover – otherwise you risk being faced with a blank screen once analogue signals are switched off.

There are three main ways to go digital:

- Convert your existing analogue TV using a digital box (e.g. Freeview, Top Up TV or BT Vision)
- Buy a new TV with digital (Freeview or freesat) built in
- Have a digital TV service, such as satellite or cable TV, installed for you. Providers include Sky, freesat and

Virgin Media

Remember, almost everyone will be able to watch Freeview after switchover – even homes currently out of coverage.

You can check the options for going digital in your area, and what channels will be available through your aerial, using the postcode checker at digitaluk.co.uk

Extra channels are available through other digital TV services, such as satellite or cable.

Virtually any TV set, including black and white ones and those without Scart sockets, can be converted using a digital box.

With Freeview HD, the best things in life are free.

How can I get all the best TV subscription free?

Freeview HD is packed with popular shows across four HD channels available with: BBC One HD, ITV1 HD, Channel 4 HD and BBC HD. Highlights include the return of Wimbledon, Popstar to Operastar and Desperate Housewives. And don't forget you still get up to 50 standard definition channels including ITV2, E4, More4, BBC Three and 5*. Plenty to keep the whole family entertained over the summer holidays.

Delivering up to five times better picture quality and incredible sound, Freeview HD offers the ultimate viewing experience this summer, providing every detail in crisp, clear high definition.



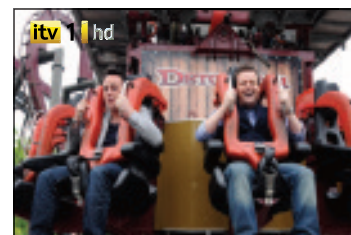
Torchwood, Thursdays 9pm on BBC One & BBC One HD

What else does Freeview offer?

Even if you're out and about enjoying the summer weather, you can record and store your favourite programmes using a Freeview+ HD recorder, ready to watch when you want (when the summer rain comes!)

Press one button and record the whole of your favourite series. Watch one show whilst recording another. Or even pause and rewind live TV to watch that amazing moment again. All in HD. And all for free.

You can now get BBC iPlayer on selected Freeview HD TVs and boxes. Once you have connected your TV or box to the internet, you can access BBC iPlayer and, depending on your product, a variety of other online services including YouTube, Facebook



Red or Black, Saturdays nights on ITV1 & ITV1 HD

and online film rental services such as Lovefilm.

For more information on all the great benefits of Freeview, visit freeview.co.uk

What do I need?

Keep an eye out for the Freeview HD logo in retail stores and online, and if you haven't already make sure you've got an HD Ready TV. You should also check you are in the right area to receive high definition TV from Freeview by entering your postcode into the coverage checker on the website freeview.co.uk/availability

Freeview HD boxes are available from just £50, Freeview+ HD boxes start from £150 and TVs with Freeview HD built in start from as little as £300.



Jo Frost: Extreme Parental Guidance, Wednesdays 8pm on Channel 4 & Channel 4 HD

Win a

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box



Freeview is giving one lucky reader the chance to win a top of the range Sony SVR HDT500 Freeview+ HD box

To be in with a chance of winning simply send an email with the subject heading 'Central' and your full name to online@freeview.co.uk

Terms & Conditions:

Competition closes 12 noon on 16th Sept 2011 and entries received after that date will be invalid. Entry is open only to residents of the United Kingdom aged 18 and over. Full terms & conditions available at Freeview.co.uk/dso/terms

The Freeview service is subject to coverage. An aerial upgrade may be required. The FREEVIEW, FREEVIEW+, FREEVIEW HD and FREEVIEW+ HD are trademarks of DTV Services LTD. ©DTV Services Ltd 2011. The channel logos are trademarks and copyright of the respective owners. The BBC One HD logo is a trademark of the British Broadcasting Corporation and issued under licence.

Dear reader,

There are now just a few weeks to go before most homes in the West Midlands start their switch to digital TV on **7 September**.

For anyone who has Freeview services* or an old analogue TV there are two important stages to remember:

7 September – Switchover stage one:

The switchover begins. Analogue BBC Two will be switched off permanently and the higher powered BBC digital services will launch. All Freeview TVs and boxes will need to be re-tuned on or after this date.

21 September – Switchover stage two:

The remaining analogue channels will be switched off and the rest of the digital services launched. All Freeview TVs and boxes will need to be re-tuned again.

Your switchover dates depend on where you live. To check your dates, enter your postcode at digitaluk.co.uk/postcodechecker or call 08456 50 50 50. Switchover makes Freeview available to virtually every home, including those that can't currently receive it, as it allows the digital signal to be strengthened and transmitted for the first time from the local relay transmitters.

Most homes will be able to receive more than 40 channels and some will receive around 15. It will also provide additional services such as audio description for viewers with disabilities. Homes who have satellite or cable on all their TV sets will not need to do anything.

If you have questions go to digitaluk.co.uk or call 08456 50 50 50.

Thank you,



Peter Monteith
Regional Manager, Anglia and Central
Digital UK



**Call 08456 50 50 50
or visit digitaluk.co.uk**

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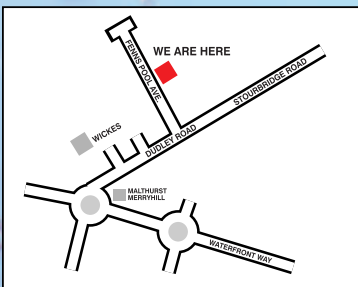
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BOSTIN' BREAKFAST

THE MEAL THAT KEEPS THE ARMY ON THE MARCH!

Experts have long claimed that breakfast is the most important meal of the day and the latest research confirms this long held view. Researchers believe that eating first thing in the morning may help to stabilise blood sugar levels, which regulate appetite and energy. They suggest that a people who eat breakfast are less likely to be hungry during the rest of the day and are, therefore, less likely to overeat. To the British Army the importance is emphasized so much that this meal is classed as an official 'parade'. Failure to attend would be deemed an offence and would often result in a charge, with the dishing out of extra guard duties or more embarrassingly, the gift of a 120mm wombat anti-tank shell to carry around the depot as a reminder of your misdemeanour. The sound of one of these incredibly heavy rounds clanging against metal dividers in the latrine whilst manoeuvring into position still haunts me to this day! I dread to think what should they made when fired!

As a raw recruit back in 1979 it was drilled into me by the

depot staff that this meal was 'not an option'! They say an Army marches on its stomach, (makes me wonder why they issued me with so many pairs of boots!), and with the possibility of immediate mobilisation to whatever conflict that flared up anywhere in the world it was essential to start the day by fuelling the stomach.

As I recall, daily breakfast was one of the two consistencies that Army life provided, the other being the failure of any of my uniforms, (no matter how well tailored) to fit correctly and present me as the lean and mean fighting machine I had imagined I had evolved to. Some 30+ years on it seems the lads serving now face the same wardrobe issues but the importance of breakfast has never been downgraded. In fact if you speak to any member of the armed forces, past or present, they would all have a story to tell on how morale had been boosted simply tucking in to a full plate of breakfast, and a steaming hot mug of 'NATO standard' tea.

The British Dietetic Association said the findings added to the growing body of evidence in support of eating breakfast every morning. A study on breakfast habits showed that breakfast eaters tend to make healthier decisions in food choices later on in the day due to breakfast intake, as well as leading a healthier lifestyle long term. Breakfast consumption has also been attributed to an improvement in memory, leading to improved academic

performance. In a 2005 study, breakfast was shown to improve college students' ability to recall information.

So there you have it, breakfast is a meal that is good for body and mind. Despite evidence showing the important role breakfast can play in helping adults and children meet nutrition

recommendations only half of us consume breakfast daily!

So our advice is make the effort and break the fast daily, the range of outlets that provide breakfast has never been so varied or accessible. Treat yourself; your body and your mind to a turbo-charged start to the day at one of these recommended locations.



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Our superhero takes to the skies above Gotham City



Hero or villain - Catwoman could be the love interest



Any clues from the Riddler?



Penguin - oldest enemy

Holy smoke - it's Batman live

THE BAT is back and this time it's in person when DC Comics' superheroes Batman and Robin are reunited - in Birmingham.

The Batmobile roars into the city for seven performances of Batman Live at the NIA between Wednesday, August 17, and Sunday August 21, as part of a world arena tour.

The adventures of the Dark Knight have been enjoyed in comics, blockbuster movies and even a rather campy television show famous for its theme tune, but the modern day Batman is probably most popular with youngsters today for his video game adventures, has never before been the star of such a spectacular live action show.

Circus

Two and a half years in the making, a 43-strong cast of actors and trained acrobats and a 3D set complete with actual constructions with video animation will bring Batman and Gotham City to life, along with the visual impact of a 100-foot bat-shaped LED video wall and an atmospheric symphonic score.

Of course, Batman and Robin would have little to do other than skulk around the Batcave without the super-villains, and all your favourite anti-heroes will be putting in an appearance.

The rogues' gallery features The Joker, The Penguin, The Riddler, Harley Quinn, Poison Ivy and - hero or villain -

mysterious vigilante known as the Batman, much to the dismay of his guardian, billionaire Bruce Wayne, who secretly is Batman.

The adventure will transport the audience across Gotham City from the Big Top to the Batcave, taking in Penguin's Iceberg Lounge and Arkham Asylum for the criminally insane.

With acrobatic stunts, amazing aerial action, choreographed fight scenes and the all-new Batmobile - redesigned by F1 racing car designer Professor Gordon Murray - it adds up to a unique experience for comic book fans to see their heroes in the costumed flesh.

Incredible

"Batman will be brought to life through this incredible stage show," said Brad Globe, President of Warner Bros Consumer Products.

"As one of the most iconic characters in all of popular culture, Batman enjoys universal appeal and we think that fans of all ages will be amazed."

That's quite a promise but judging by reviews of performances so far - the show has already played in Manchester, Newcastle, Glasgow and this week Sheffield - it's been described as a thrilling family show.

Much attention is given to the staging and costumes, not surprising considering the show is rumoured to have cost more than £7 million to create.

The Birmingham NIA shows are at 7pm from Thursday to Saturday with extra shows at 11am and 3pm on the Saturday. Sunday's show is at 3pm only. Ticket prices (excluding booking fee) range from £20 to £35 and there are also limited availability of premium 'Gotham City' seats. Call 0844 338 8000 or visit theticketfactory.com online. See www.thenia.co.uk or www.batmanlive.com for more details on the show.

Comics characters and stories, the story for Batman Live focuses on Robin's thirst for revenge (or should that be quest for justice?) after the murder of his family which leads him to seek out the



Batman and Robin appear in Birmingham from August 17



Harley Quinn - aka Dr Harleen Frances Quinzel



Primary enemy - Poison Ivy



Joker - master criminal

ZUMBA
fitness
with **Jenny**

To all my ZUMBA friends - listed below are the venues for my classes - hope you can join me at one, two or even all five!!

MONDAY:	6.00-7.00 pm	Swindon Community Centre, 17 High Street, Swindon DY3 4NP
MONDAY:	7.30-8.30 pm	Hillcrest School, Simms Lane, Netherton DY2 0PB
TUESDAY:	9.30-10.30 am	The Bede Hall, Giggity Lane, Wombourne WV5 0AS
TUESDAY:	6.15-7.15 pm	Claverley Village Hall, Wolverhampton WV5 7DZ
WEDNESDAY:	6.15-7.15 pm	Hillcrest School, Simms Lane, Netherton DY2 0PB
THURSDAY:	5.45-6.30 pm	Bodywise, Mill Race Lane, DY8 1JN
THURSDAY:	7.00-8.00 pm	Missfits 35-37, Market Street, Kingswinford, DY6 9JY
THURSDAY:	8.00-9.00 pm	Missfits 35-37, Market Street, Kingswinford, DY6 9JY
FRIDAY:	6.15-7.15 pm	Pensnett Community Centre, High Street, Brierley Hill DY5 4JQ

Contact: **Jenny** on 07852 751526

whitehousejennifer@yahoo.co.uk

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In our party we'll get those Zumba For Kids bodies moving with a fun warm-up! We'll then move from song to song with the best ZumbAtomic music and routines, play some party games and have a lot of fun! Each child will then pick a cool prize from the Zumba For Kids gift box!

Dress children in light comfortable clothing, with socks and soft soled shoes (pumps or soft trainers).



ZUMBA FITNESS TESTIMONIAL

I've been doing Zumba for nearly six months now and it's changed my life for the better. Before I found out about Zumba I didn't really care much for exercise and I wasn't bothered what I ate. I wasn't very active and didn't have a lot of confidence in my self until I found out that Zumba was coming into my area and so I thought I would give it a try and it was the best decision I ever made. Since doing Zumba I've lost two stone in weight which has given me more confidence. I feel a lot more active, a lot more energised, have a lot more willpower to what I eat and go to Zumba three times a week. I absolutely love it, it's a good way to meet new people, have a laugh and generally enjoy yourself. There's no right or wrong way of doing Zumba, you do it to your own ability, so even if you have no rhythm or you have two left feet it doesn't matter. My Zumba teacher is Jennifer Whitehouse. She's an amazing teacher and easy to get on with. Jenny is a professional and knowledgeable instructor. The classes are well run, well organised and offer a variety of different Zumba dances each week. I would recommend to anyone who wants to try Zumba give Jenny's classes a try, you won't be disappointed.

Friday

BET 6:00 Breakfast 6:15 Hair Hunters, 9:00 Homecoming Under the Hammer, 9:00 BCB News, Weather, 11:00 Week-End Update, 11:30 The 100th Anniversary of the 13th Amendment, 12:00 BCB News, Weather, 1:30 Regional News, Weather, 1:50 Doctors, 2:15 Escape to the Country, 3:00 BET News, Weather, 3:30 The 100th Anniversary of the 13th Amendment, 4:00 BCB News, Weather, 5:30 Regional News, Weather, 6:00 BCB News, Weather, 6:30 The 100th Anniversary of the 13th Amendment, 7:00 BET News, Weather, 7:30 The One Show, 8:00 Entertainment Tonight, 8:30 BCB News, Regional News, 9:00 The 100th Anniversary of the 13th Amendment, 9:30 Family 2.0, 10:00 Miranda, 10:30 BET News, 11:00 Regional News, Weather, 11:35 John B. Edwards, 12:00 The 100th Anniversary of the 13th Amendment, 12:30 National Lottery Friday Night Draw, 11:55 The Penultimate, (1987), Weather/News, 1:05 Sports Zone, National World Empire of the Desert, 1:30

BBC2 6.00 Cbeebies, 7.00 CBBC, 8.30 Cbeebies, 11.35 Cartoon, R 19.55 Film
Farewell My Lovely (1944) 11SDiagnostic Murder
R 2.00 Wasted Down Under, R 3.00 Weekly
Link, R 3.35 The Holly Blinked Food Tour
Britain, R 3.50 Ploft! R 5.15 Put Your Mouth
Where You Mouth! R 6.00 Eggheads, R 6.30
Celebrity Eggheads, R 7.00 South Africa With
Us, R 7.30 The Bear Family and Me, R 8.30
Gardener's World, R 9.00 The Big Bang Theory,
The Bob Brydon Show, 10.30 Newsnight
11.00 The Royal Show, 11.15 Edinburgh Festival

ITV 1.00 Daybreak, 3.30 Lorraine, 6.25 This
Jersey Kids Show, (R) 9.30 The
Morning, 12.30 Let's Do Lunch with Gino & M.
1.30 ITV News, Weather, 1.55 Regional News,
2.00 Regional News, 2.30 Regional News, 2.55
Didididdo! Red Det., (R) 3.50 Regional Weather,
4.00 Roostery & Thyme, (R) 5.00 The Circle, 5.
6.00 Regional News, Weather, 6.30 ITV News,
Weather, 7.00 Emmetville, 7.30 Coronation Street,
8.30 Dickinson! Red Det., 9.30 Coronation
Street, 9.50 Someone's Daughter, Someone's Son,
10.00 The Vicar of Dibley, 10.30 Regional News,
Weather, 10.45 Film: Jaws, (1975), R.
The Zone, ITV, Music Headlines, 2.50 Film:

[illegible]

Movie *Lunatics*, **F** 1:45 *Celebrity: Big Brother Launch Show*, **F** 1:45 *Neighborhood*, **F** 2:15 *OS Crime Scene Investigation*, **F** 3:30 *Plains*, **F** 3:30 *Girl*, **F** (108) *Romantic Comedy*, **F** 4:00 *Clint Eastwood and Josely Collins*, **F** 5:00 *S Newscast*, **S** 5:30 *Weather*, **S** 5:30 *Neighborhood*, **F** 6:00 *Meerkat Manor*, **F** 6:25 *CSI: 2.0*, **F** 6:55 *S Newscast*, **F** 7:00 *Critter*, **S** 7:00 *Uptown*, **F** 7:00 *The Gadget Show*, **S** 7:00 *Celebrity Big Brother: Live*, **F** 8:00 *Dawson's Creek*, **F** 8:00 *Survivor*, **F** 8:00 *Celebrity Big Brother: Hit on the Skids*, **F** 8:30 *SuperCops*, **F** 8:55 *Motorport Handi*, **F** 9:30 *The Gadget Show*, **F** 9:50 *Country Secrets*, **F** 9:50 *Wildlife SOS*, **F** 5:00 *Rough Guide to Shoreside*, **F** 5:30 *House Doctor*, **F**

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Paris Sightseeing Special		FRI 26 AUG	4	£189.95	£149.95

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DEPARTING MOST MONDAYS

Isle of Wight

Eastbourne	£159.95	Mondays 22, 29 Aug 5 Sep	£169.95
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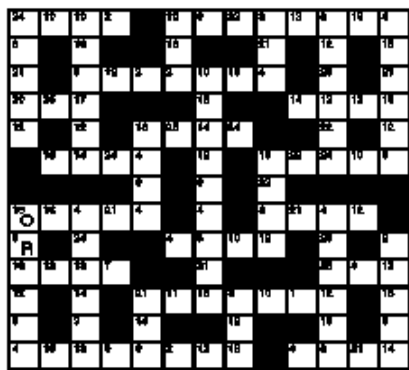
SEARCH: DAILY EXPRESS PUZZLES



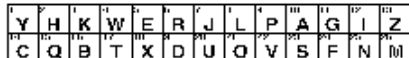
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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:



1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Effects a change of look at sea (8, 6)
- Unit in money (8)
- Man of many parts, perhaps (9)
- Gets what one deserves, setting a snare (9)
- Is it for the foot locked? (4, 8)
- Nothing exists solely for truth (6)
- Revised and altered a deed about 11 (6)
- Beacons in brief for bars (7)
- Split returns after the French animal appears (9)
- Parade in April (5, 4)
- It's eaten in abundance (8)
- The chief rangers don't get flustered, it seems (4, 7)

Down

- The grain sounds twisted (8)
- Closes in on a motive, personal (9)
- Possibly stays in the woods (6)
- Scavenged, finding birds in food (7)
- Last word in the Latin language (9)
- Accept that buns won't want to (4, 2, 6)
- It will be presented by a group at one (8, 6)
- Check the power to strengthen the situation (9)
- Started as a society production (7)
- Welcome break for a prisoner? (6)
- Ease off the down below pressure? (8, 2)
- But it won't be a hindrance to drink light (8)

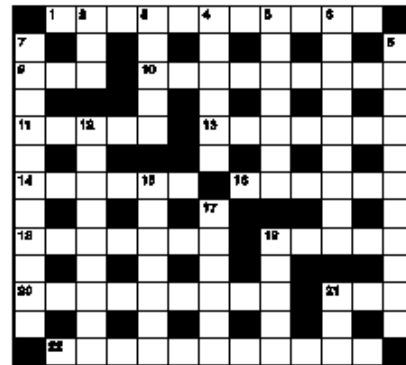
Quick Clues:

Across

- Adapt (11)
- Look on (8)
- Rivalry (9)
- Red Indian tent (6)
- Philosopher (7)
- 3 electronic valves (6)
- Road (6)
- Finger and guard (7)
- Implant (6)
- Outfit behaviour (9)
- Sarcasm (8)
- Distinctive chance for (11)

Down

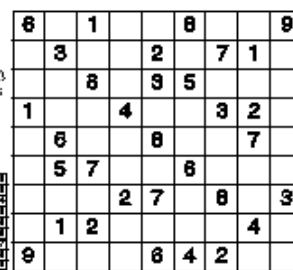
- Sheddered (8)
- Abnormally tall (5)
- Climbs (6)
- Chancellor (7)
- Density (9)
- Poverty (11)
- Unkindness (11)
- Prerequisite (9)
- Lovers (7)
- Streamers (6)
- Machinery (9)
- Determined (8)



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1. Pangea's Spinaway, 10. Quince, 11. Squares, 12. T. J. M. 13. 15. S. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.

Sudoku

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.



Circlegram

Replace the question mark with a letter so that the letters within each circle can be arranged to form words on a common theme. What are the three words, and the letter represented by the question mark?



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Priced around £69,950, this first-floor flat in Chapel Court, Pensnett, is now on the market

First-floor flat suitable for a first purchase

Ideal for the first-time buyer or single person, this modern first-floor flat is for sale based on offers around £69,950.

Convenient for all local facilities, the flat in Chapel Court, Pensnett, has a hall lounge, modern bathroom and kitchen and

bedroom – as well as parking. The living room is 14ft 4in by 10ft 5in, while the kitchen measures 11ft 8in by 8ft and comes with a range of base and eye level units with rolled-edge work surfaces, stainless steel sink, integrated electric oven, hob and extractor and plumbing for automatic washing machine.

The double bedroom is 11ft 9in by 9ft 9in and has a range of fitted

wardrobes and double glazed window to the front, while the bathroom has a white suite comprising panel bath with shower over, low flush WC, pedestal hand wash basin and tiled walls.

The property stands in lawned communal grounds and there is a communal parking area.

For more details call Taylors on 01384 265265.



A cosy lounge measures 14ft 4in x 10ft 5in and has two uPVC windows to the rear elevation



In the kitchen there is a range of base and eye-level units, electric oven, hob and extractor

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£995 PCM



HALESOWEN, HUNTLANDS ROAD

Located on the Huntlands Estate, is this three story terraced property, close to Halesowen town centre, briefly comprising of: Three Bedrooms, Two Reception Rooms, Fitted Kitchen, Double Glazing, Warm Air Heating, Family Bathroom, Front and Rear Gardens, Driveway Parking

£695 PCM



OLDBURY, SUFFOLK ROAD

A part furnished to suit detached property in popular residential area, briefly comprising of: Three Bedrooms, Fitted Kitchen, Lounge and Separate Dining Room, Bathroom with Shower, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating, Front and Rear Gardens, Driveway Parking and Garage

£650 PCM



HALESOWEN, ROUNDHILLS ROAD

A beautifully presented three story town house, located in the popular Hurst Green area of Halesowen, briefly comprising of: Three Bedrooms, Fitted Kitchen, Master with En-Suite, Downstairs WC, Spacious Lounge, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating, Allocated Parking behind Electric Gates

£625 PCM



HALESOWEN, WROXLEY HOUSE, UFFMOOR LANE

Luxury Living in Hayley Green A superb, brand new luxury apartment on the first floor. Offering spacious accommodation including: Open Plan Lounge/Kitchen and Diner with French Doors to Balcony, Two Double Bedrooms, Master with En-Suite, Further Well Appointed Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing and Allocated Parking.

£625 PCM



HALESOWEN, QUEEN STREET

Situated within walking distance to Halesowen town centre is this large end terrace home, comprising of: Three Bedrooms, Large Lounge, Large Fitted Kitchen, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating, Downstairs Bathroom with Shower, Driveway Parking, Unfurnished

£595 PCM



HAGLEY, MILL POOL CLOSE

Located in a peaceful location with lovely views is this unfurnished luxury ground floor apartment, briefly comprising of: Gas Central Heating, Through Lounge/Dining Room with View Across Open Countryside, Fitted Kitchen, Two Double Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower & Separate WC, Communal Gardens, Parking Space and Garage

£595 PCM



STOURBRIDGE, THE PUMPHOUSE

This luxury modern furnished first floor apartment briefly comprises of: One Double bedroom, Stunning Open Plan Lounge, High Spec Fitted Kitchen, Bathroom with Shower, Electric Storage Heating, Parking Space.

£575 PCM



HALESOWEN, HARDEN MANOR COURT

This light and airy first floor apartment, situated a stones throw away from Halesowen town centre, briefly comprising of: Two Double Bedrooms, Large Spacious Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, Family Bathroom with Shower, Double Glazing, Warm Air Heating, Communal Garden, Plenty of Parking, Unfurnished

£550 PCM



HALESOWEN, BLOOMFIELD STREET NORTH

An extremely well presented two bedroomed and terraced house being situated within easy access to Halesowen town, briefly comprising of: Lounge with Feature Fireplace, Kitchen Diner, Large Conservatory, Two Bedrooms, First Floor Family Bathroom, Charming Rear Garden, Gas Central Heating and Partial Double Glazing, On Road Parking, Internal Inspection is Highly Recommended, Unfurnished

£525 PCM



HALESOWEN, CHURCHILL ROAD

An opportunity to rent this unfurnished ground floor apartment, in a Cul-De-Sac Location, on the Huntlands Estate, comprising of: Two Double Bedrooms, Fitted Kitchen, Lounge, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Shower Room, Garage En Bloc, Allocated Parking, Own Garden

£525 PCM



BLACKHEATH, BEAUMONT ROAD

A modern mid terraced house set back on this very popular road, briefly comprising of: Lounge, New Fitted Kitchen, New Bathroom with Shower, Driveway Parking, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Rear Garden, Conservatory, Unfurnished

£495 PCM



HALESOWEN, EDWARD ROAD

This unfurnished and terraced house Close to local shops, and buses, briefly comprising of: Two Bedrooms, Fitted Dining Kitchen, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Downstairs WC, Bathroom with Shower, Driveway Parking, Rear Garden

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OLDBURY, WORCESTER ROAD

An Unfurnished semi-detached house, briefly comprising of: Two Bedrooms, Lounge, Fitted Dining Kitchen, Lounge, Bathroom with Shower, Utility Area, Front and Rear Gardens, On Road Parking

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NETHERTON, ROUND STREET

Set in a quiet road, is this lovely semi-detached house, briefly comprising of: Gas Central Heating, Living Room, Fitted Kitchen, Two bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, Rear Garden and Driveway Parking for 2 Cars, Unfurnished

£475 PCM



UPPER GORNAL, TUDOR VALE

Located in this ever popular cul-de-sac is this end terrace house, briefly comprising of: Gas Central Heating, Spacious Living Room, Fitted Dining Kitchen, Downstairs WC, Two Double Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, Rear Garden, Driveway Parking, Unfurnished

£475 PCM



ROWLEY REGIS, ELY CLOSE

This ground floor apartment, minutes away from the local motorway access, briefly comprising of: Two Bedrooms, Fitted Kitchen, Lounge, Bathroom with Shower, Allocated Parking Space.

£425 PCM



OLDBURY, CAUSEWAY GREEN ROAD

This large, split level flat above shops, within walking distance to bus links and close to J2 of the M5, briefly comprising of: Gas Central Heating, Spacious Living Room, Fitted Kitchen, Two Double Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, Parking to Rear, Unfurnished

£425 PCM



CRADLEY HEATH, VICTORIA GARDENS

A modern ground floor apartment, in the centre of Old Hill, with local bus stop outside, and Old Hill train station close by, briefly comprising of: One Double Bedroom, Electric Storage Heating, Double Glazing, Fitted Kitchen, Bathroom with Shower, Allocated Parking, Unfurnished

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QUINTON, NAYLORS CLOSE

Situated in a very quiet cul-de-sac, and close to the M5, this unfurnished ground floor apartment comprises of: Electric Storage Heating, Living Room, Fitted Kitchen, Double Bedroom, Bathroom with Shower, Parking Space

£395 PCM



HALESOWEN, NETHEREND LANE

On this popular development, is this unfurnished ground floor flat, briefly comprising of: Electric Storage Heating, Living Room, Fitted Kitchen, Double Bedroom, Bathroom with Shower, Communal Garden, Garage

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Your essential guide to the world of motoring compiled by Motoring Editor Sharon Walters

Far Eastern car brands top reliability chart

THE MOST reliable second-hand cars are those made in Japan and Korea, according to a new survey.

But although European cars are more prone to faults, the cost of repairing them is cheaper, the survey by What Car? magazine and warranty company Warranty Direct found.

Honda topped the most reliable used car table, which was based on the number of faults occurring in a year for cars between three and eight years of age.

Toyota was the second most reliable second-hand car, followed by

Suzuki, Lexus, Mitsubishi and Mazda.

According to the survey, there was only a nine per cent chance of a Honda having a fault in 12 months.

In contrast, there was a 55 per cent chance of a fault in a Land Rover, which was 35th, and bottom, in the reliability table. At the foot of the table were Saab, (in 32nd place), Renault (33rd) and Alfa Romeo (34th).

However, Renault was one of the cheapest cars to repair, with average repair costs of £242.22. Only Fiat (£241.63) had cheaper repair costs.

In contrast, Porsche (£689.99) had the highest average repair costs, with Mazda in second place at £462.58.

What Car? editor Chas Hallett said: "This year's study is a stark reminder of the disparity in reliability between Far Eastern brands, which dominate the top 10, and European brands, which contribute the bulk of the bottom 10."

These were the most reliable used cars in terms of the chances of faults in 12 months:

1. Honda
2. Toyota
3. Suzuki
4. Lexus
5. Mitsubishi
6. Mazda

7. Subaru
8. Hyundai
9. Kia
10. Nissan

Honda Jazz which is one of the most reliable used cars on the market

These



were the least

reliable, with Land Rover at the bottom of the table:

"Honda topped the most reliable used car table"



Toyota Yaris is high on the list of most reliable

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Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km). Vauxhall range: Urban: 14.4 (19.6)-67.3 (4.2), Extra-urban: 27.4 (10.3)-91.1 (3.1), Combined: 20.6 (13.7)-80.7 (3.5). CO₂ emissions: 324-94g/km.

*Not available on Expression, ES, ES Tech models. Finance provided by Vauxhall Finance, a trading style of GMAC UK plc, PO Box 6666, Cardiff, CF15 7YT. Finance is subject to status, terms and conditions. Applicants must be 18 years or over. Offer applies to private individuals. Vauxhall Partners and small businesses 1-24 (purchase only excluding B2B). All other customers are excluded. Offer available on orders or registrations before 30 September 2011. Vauxhall Lifetime Warranty covers lifetime ownership of first registered keeper, 100,000 mile limit. Terms and conditions apply. *Customer deposit shown after deduction of Vauxhall contribution.

New people's car updates history

By Iain Dooley

Volkswagen is pitching its new Beetle as a car for the 21st century. In common with so many fashionable items from the past, it would be appropriate to view this as a reboot of the classic automotive icon.

Of course Volkswagen has been here before. 1998 saw the release of the then all-new Beetle, which was an attempt at faithfully reproducing the earnest, everyday attributes of its groundbreaking predecessor.

The Beetle is the cornerstone of the Volkswagen family, and is largely why the German firm is persisting with a modern day version.

And it appears to have learnt something from the success of the competition. This "New Beetle" is being promoted with a sportier edge and a greater emphasis on lifestyle and pop culture.

The car is little bigger than the 1998 car – a fraction longer and wider – while it's not as tall but more streamlined in profile thanks to a longer bonnet and more steeply inclined windscreen.

Carrying capacity is up and occupants fore and aft benefit from more room, while boot space has increased.

Three petrol and one diesel unit will power UK cars. At launch, the choice will be between a 1.2 TSI 105 horsepower unit connected to a seven-speed DSG gearbox plus a 1.4 TSI, 160 horsepower lump and six-speed manual gearbox. Later in 2012 you'll also have the choice of a manual version of that 1.2 petrol motor, a 1.6-litre TDI diesel and a range-topping 2.0-litre TSI petrol unit packing 200 horsepower.

To reinforce the Beetle's new sporty character, both the 2.0-litre car and the 1.4 variant feature Volkswagen's trick XDS differential to boost grip and stability at speed.

The previous car's bud vase might have disappeared but this Beetle's cabin remains sufficiently different from anything else Volkswagen makes to earn it its stripes.

The cabin is roomy enough up front, with just enough space in the back for adults if the journey isn't too long.

The sloping roof is the reason for this, although children won't feel cramped, making the Beetle an interesting family car alternative.

Like all modern Volkswagens, the Beetle isn't short of toys or safety kit. The company decided to pitch the car higher, and satnav, climate control, premium audio, leather and a panoramic glass roof are all on the options list.

The list of standard kit is good too, with air-con, DAB radio, alloy wheels, Bluetooth and parking sensors spread across the three trim levels.



Bluetooth and DAB radio are standard and satnav is on the list of options

"The Beetle is the cornerstone of the Volkswagen family, and is largely why the German firm is persisting with a modern day version."

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Fuel consumption figures for the Honda range in mpg (l/100km): Urban 22.2–61.4 (12.7–4.6), Extra Urban 40.4–67.3 (7.0–4.2), Combined 31.0–64.2 (9.1–4.4). CO2 emissions: 215–101 g/km. Price Points: £11,735 applies to Jazz 1.2 i-VTEC S Manual and includes metallic paint; £12,995 applies to Civic 1.4 Type S i-Shift and excludes metallic paint (£440 extra); £22,365 applies to CR-V 2.0 i-VTEC SE Manual and includes metallic paint; £18,135 applies to CR-Z 1.5 i-VTEC IMA S Manual and includes metallic paint. Offers valid on new retail cars registered from 1 July to 30 September 2011 and *excludes Jazz Hybrid. Honda Hire Purchase: Indemnities may be required in certain circumstances. Finance is only available to persons aged 18 or over subject to status. All figures are correct at time of publication but may be subject to change. Credit provided by Honda Finance Europe PLC, 470 London Road, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8QY. Servicing: 4 years free servicing or 50,000 miles, whichever comes first and includes a maximum of 4 services. Free servicing covers the manufacturer's scheduled servicing only. Roadside Assistance: Covers the vehicle and authorised drivers for 4 years emergency breakdown, subject to the vehicle being maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's servicing schedule.

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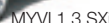
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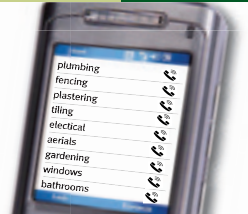
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sport

Tom wins scholarship to US

A young footballer from Wall Heath, Dudley has been awarded a sports scholarship to attend the University of Science and Arts Oklahoma.

Tom White, aged 23, will take up the scholarship later this month where he will continue to train as a player while studying for a degree in Physical Education and Fitness. Tom secured his

scholarship through Glasgow's FirstPoint USA, the largest sports scholarship consultants in the world.

Tom, who previously played for Compton Park Saints, has already played football overseas, competing at county level in New South Wales, Australia for Yoogali Soccer Club in 2009.

He said: 'I've now got the

opportunity to play a sport I love at a challenging level and at the same time study at an excellent University to set me up for the future. I can't wait to get there and start my training.'

Nicole Montoya from First-Point USA said: 'We wish Tom all the best in his new career. American colleges are keen to attract the very best.'

Dudley fall to Cradley

Dudley Sports 1 Cradley Town 2

Sport's defensive laxity continued from last term as Cradley raced into a half-time lead with a brace of goals from Matthew Bailey. The hosts improved after the break but a lone strike by Craig Tibbetts failed to deny Cradley victory.

ROBINS FALTER AT THE FIRST HURDLE

DUDLEY TOWN 0 GOODRICH 2

West Midlands (Regional) League Premier Division

Dudley Town started their season in disappointing fashion as Goodrich's new look side deservedly took all three points away from The Dell. The hosts were left to rue several missed chances in the first half which if taken may have altered the outcome.

Naming his first team since his summer promotion to the managerial hot-seat Andy Burgess elected to hand debuts to six of his summer recruits.

Whilst there was no place in the starting eleven for last season regulars Chris Whitaker and Danny Bell who both had to make do with a seat on the bench. Last season's top-scorer Dreniz Bala remains on holiday and was unavailable for selection.

Dudley could have taken the lead in the fourth minute when newly appointed captain Richard Langford headed an Anthony Cox corner over the bar. Goodrich too had early chances as goalkeeper Mark Garvey did well to tip a long range shot over the bar.

Both sides continued to hassle but as the half went on appeared Dudley would make the breakthrough. Nikki Faux missed a golden opportunity for The Robins as he failed to convert from close range whilst Ben Stretton forced a fine save from Ben Astley diving to his right to push away a shot from fifteen yards out.

Dangerous

The visitors looked dangerous on the break however with a fine tackle from Rob Whitley preventing Jordan Lee from advancing whilst Garvey made a fine save from the lively Levi Chambers with five minutes remaining of the opening period.

There was still time for Cox to come close with a fine curling shot right on the stroke of half-time that agonisingly cleared Astley's crossbar.

Goodrich made the breakthrough on 51 minutes. A free-kick on the edge of the area was placed home by the impressive Tim Jackson. It was soon two. Jordan Lee picking up on a mistake by Rob Whitley and chip Garvey just three minutes after the visiting side had initially taken the lead.

Burgess introduced Harry Williams, Danny Bell and Wayne Roberts as his side went in search of a way back into the game. Indeed it was Williams who had a fine chance on 73 minutes but the resulting shot cleared the Goodrich crossbar.

The best chance of Dudley staging a comeback fell with seven minutes remaining. A melee in the box saw substitute Matt Curley foul Nikki Faux which saw Ben Stretton stroke the ball wide from the resulting spot-kick. If anyone looked more likely to score it was Goodrich, and they came close. Substitute Michael Allen broke free on the right wing but his cross couldn't find the diving head of Chambers.

Dudley now entertain Bustleholme on Wednesday as they aim to pick up their first points of the campaign.

Dudley Town: Garvey, Reeves, Watkins, Langford, Whitley, Perry (Roberts), Warner (Bell), Stretton, Francis-Mills (Williams), Faux, Cox. Subs not used: Whittaker, Jasper.

Goodrich: Astley, Harvey, Porter, Payne, Madeley (Curley), Griffiths, Smith (Bishop), Loach, Lee (Allen), Chambers, Jackson. Subs not used: Fryer, James

Attendance: 66 Referee: P. Read

Pre-season ends on a low

REDDITCH UNITED 3 HALESOWEN TOWN 0

Halesowen ended their pre-season campaign on a downer with defeat at recently-relegated Redditch.

The Reds, who had impressively won their previous nine friendly matches, included a trio of former Yeltz men in their line-up—Dean Coleman, David Blenkinsopp and Lee Osbourne.

They took the lead when Aaron Moses-Garvey played in Cameron Jones who picked his

spot in the top right-hand corner. Yeltz goalkeeper Paul Evans then did well to pluck the ball from the top corner after Peter Folkes diverted another Redditch shot goalwards. The home side made their dominance count just past the half hour mark when Phil Green added a second, side-stepping his marker to hit a 20-yarder past Evans.

Halesowen responded through Anthony Bruce who tested Coleman from range before both sides had players

booked in what was becoming a feisty encounter.

The second half was fairly incident free as Redditch coasted to victory, with Halesowen's only chance coming when substitute Sam Willis went close with a free kick. Redditch made it 3-0 in injury time through a Lei Brown penalty after Ben Love handled in the area.

Halesowen start their Evo Stick Southern Division One South & West campaign this Saturday at Paulton Rovers.

Yeltz are on the up for new campaign

Halesowen Town head into the new campaign with boss Shaun Cunningham claiming: 'It's a club on the up again.' Off-field problems have hindered Yeltz in recent seasons and the turmoil took its toll last season with relegation from the Southern Premier.

But new owner Steve Lynch has brought stability to the boardroom and Cunningham is hoping for a successful season in the Evo-Stik Division One South & West.

'The club has come a long way in a short space of time, both on and off the pitch,' said The Grove boss.

'The club is on the up again and there's a positive feel around the place.'

Pre-season results have included a victory and a draw against higher opposition in Hedsnesford and Evesham respectively.

Striker Justin Nisbett has returned from Stourbridge and Cunningham also hopes to sign former Walsall defender Aaron Lescott.

Cunningham admits going into the Evo-Stik Division One South & West is a step into the unknown.

Aug 13	Paulton Rovers	(A)
Aug 16	North Leigh	(H)
Aug 20	Bideford	(H)
Aug 23	Yate Town	(A)
Aug 27	Mangotsfield United	(A)
Aug 29	Cinderford United	(H)
Sep 13	Abingdon United	(A)
Sep 24	Wimborne Town	(A)
Oct 1	Thatcham Town	(H)
Oct 4	Didcot Town	(H)
Oct 29	Sholing	(H)
Nov 5	Taunton Town	(A)
Nov 12	Tiverton Town	(H)
Nov 16	Bishops Cleeve	(A)
Nov 19	Gosport Borough	(A)
Nov 26	Poole Town	(H)
Dec 3	Hungerford Town	(A)
Dec 10	Bridgwater Town	(H)
Dec 17	Clevedon Town	(A)
Dec 18	Stourport Swifts	(H)
Dec 31	Mangotsfield United	(H)

Jan 2	Cinderford Town	(A)
Jan 7	Yate Town	(H)
Jan 14	North Leigh	(A)
Jan 21	Paulton Rovers	(H)
Jan 25	Bideford	(A)
Feb 4	Didcot Town	(A)
Feb 11	Abingdon United	(H)
Feb 18	Thatcham Town	(A)
Feb 25	Wimborne Town	(H)
Mar 3	Bishops Cleeve	(H)
Mar 10	Tiverton Town	(A)
Mar 17	Gosport Borough	(H)
Mar 24	Poole Town	(A)
Mar 31	Bridgwater Town	(A)
Apr 7	Hungerford Town	(H)
Apr 14	Clevedon Town	(H)
Apr 17	Sholing	(A)
Apr 28	Taunton Town	(H)

Chance to putt in some help for charity

The RSPCA is hosting a charity golf day in Halesowen and wants pet-loving putters to come forward to help them raise cash for the centre.

Covering an 18-hole course at the club, teams can take part in the event on Thursday August 25, where the tee off starts at 1pm.

The cost for teams of four is £200 which includes refreshments throughout the day and a two course meal to finish.

Helen Tuite, community fundraiser for the centre said: 'This is our first golf day and we are so grateful to the club for letting us hold it on their beautiful grounds.'

'We also have a lot of local companies and supporters who have entered teams and even if people can't enter a team they could support us by sponsoring a hole instead, perhaps in memory of a pet.'

There will also be a raffle and a chance for guests to meet Libby the dog who is in need of a new home.

Martin Scriven of Scriven and Co, Quinton, are just one of the companies showing their support.

'We are delighted to help this great charity because of the amazing work they do,' he said.

'Being a dog owner myself I know how much love they give back so it would be amazing if we were able to find Libby a new home.'

To find out more or to enter a team email Helen at htuite@rspca.org.uk or call 07715 540518.

Anyone interested in giving Libby the dog a new home should contact the animal centre on 0300 123 0754 between 11am and 3.30pm.



Back, Martin Scriven of Scriven & Co, which is entering a team and sponsoring a hole, administrator at Halesowen Golf Club Noelle Heath and Helen Tuite, community fundraising manager for the RSPCA Birmingham Animal Centre with Libby the dog which is at the centre looking for new home

Roller coaster ride ends with Hill sharing the top spot

OLD HILL CRICKET CLUB

Saturday August 6

OLD HILL (24 POINTS) 211 BEAT WALMLEY (6 POINTS) 174 FOR 37 RUNS.

It was fasten your seat belts for yet another roller coaster ride at Haden Hill when the First XI took on Walmley.

The visitors won the toss and chose to field and they had an immediate success in the second over as Mike Hingley was out without scoring. Nitesh Patel (23) joined Dan Cox (37) and they put together a second wicket stand of 64 before being parted.

Captain Nathan Round (49) looked well set and together with a superb innings by Dan Wood (62) seemed to have set Old Hill up for a large total as they reached 201-5 wickets in the 48th over.

Then a major collapse meant the hosts lost 5 wickets for 10 runs in 3 overs to be bowled out for 211 with 4 overs remaining. Before Walmley could begin their reply, rain intervened which necessitated a recalculation of overs and target (204 off 53 overs to attain a winning draw). On resumption, the visitors also lost early wickets to Zafran Ali to be 14-2 in the 5th over.

A brilliant run out by Nathan Round with a direct hit and the capture of Grijters (89) to Zafran Ali, it was left to Sharkey Hussain to finish off the tail with the aid of a Nigel Davenport catch, the visitors finally capitulating to 174 all out in 44 overs as Old Hill joined Berkswell in top position in the League Table.

Walmley (20 points) 216-1 beat Old Hill (3 points) 214-6 by 9 wickets.

The 2nd XI batted first having lost the toss in their away game at The Memorial Ground and thanks to a wonderful century by Carl Whyte (105) backed up by Alex Hills (40) and Hamza Ahmed (35 not out), Old Hill were able to post a total of 216-6 wickets off their 50 overs.

Ross-on-Wye (6 points) 202 lost to Old Hill (24 points) 203-5 by 5 wickets.

The 3rd XI visited third placed Ross-on-Wye in a crunch game at the top of the League as the season reaches its climax and came away with a well-earned victory. Ross batted first and made a total of 202 all out in 46 overs as excellent bowling by Dan Such (2-25), Richard Lloyd (2-40) and Nick Couzens kept a tight grip on the hosts batsmen. In reply, veteran Alan Neal and Dan Such (44) set Old Hill on the road to victory with an opening partnership of 72 runs, well backed up by Reece Shilcock (34) and Ollie Moseley (59 not out) as the visitors eased their way to victory by 5 wickets in 43.3 overs.

Old Hill (24 points) 215-8 beat Ross-on-Wye (4 points) 148 by 67 runs.

Having been asked to bat by Ross-on-Wye at Wassell Grove, the 4th XI set about posting a challenging total as Jon Baig Jnr (64) and Izzy Khan (33) put together a century opening partnership as Old Hill's youngsters scored 215-8 wickets in their 45 overs. Rain then intervened and the visitors were given a revised target of 186 in 39 overs to obtain a winning draw.

This task always looked beyond Ross as Captain Irshad Ahmed (4-19) and Lewis Javadi (3-25) backed up by some great fielding, particularly Keiron Daniels with a great all round performance with the bat gloves and in the slips, as the visitors were bowled out for 148 in 35 overs. This was Old Hill's sixth victory in their inaugural season in W.C.L. Division 5.

Sunday August 7

Springvale (0 points) 92-4 lost to Old Hill (10 points) 278-3 on faster than rate.

Following a delayed start, the Sunday XI game away at Springvale started under threatening skies. Bating first, Old Hill amassed a very large total of 278-3 wickets off 36 overs with Nigel Davenport (129) scoring a magnificent century closely followed by Richard Sydenham (87).

After further showers, the Springvale reply finally got under way but they never scored quickly enough as the Old Hill bowlers led by Jon Baig (3-20) kept a tight grip on the scoring rate.

The match ended with the hosts total on 92-4 wickets off 24 overs, well short of their target score of 187. Old Hill won the game easily on a much superior scoring rate.

Derek Griffiths

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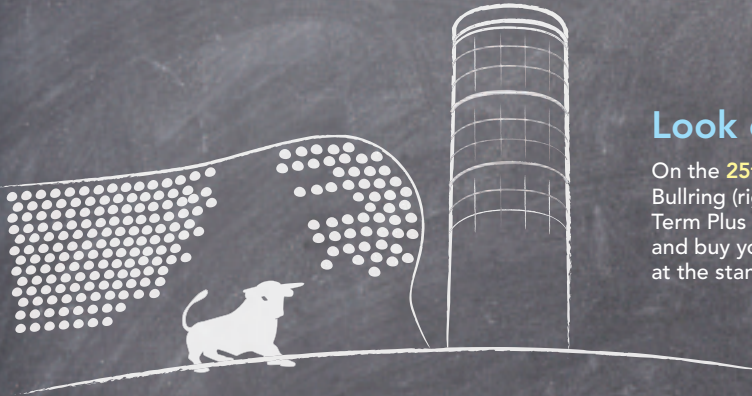
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